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The Wooing of Tokala

An Intimate Tale of the Wild Life of the American Indian Drawn from Camp and Trail

By
FRANKLIN WELLES CALKINS
Author of "Two Wilderness Voyagers," and "My Host, the Enemy"

New York Chicago Toronto
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To those who love justice and whose search is after truth. To those, in fact, who have passed out from the red lights of war's heritage to attain the clear vision of men, this book is dedicated by one who knows the native race, at least as well as he does the men and women of his own.

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I

THE BRULE DANCER

AT an Oglala buffalo village the figure of chief interest, passing the teepee doors, was not that of Red Cloud nor of Yellow-Iron, but that of Koska, the Brulé dancer. This young man lived at the Missouri River, where his father was wealthy, owning many horses which he had stolen from the Scili or Pawnees.

Koska was able to dance the muscle dance, and as he danced he shook a bull rattle and jingled the bells upon his ankles so that people said he made very fine music indeed.

Koska's voice was wonderful, a great mystery gift. When he shouted at the pony races or in the ball games it was as if Wakinyan, the Thunder God, were speaking. At times when this young man was talking his words were very mysterious; for it appeared that some one spoke in the air above his head or from the ground at his feet. No one could tell where his words came from. People were as-

tonished and, at such times, Koska became embarrassed and would cease speaking. The people wondered—it was very mysterious. "It is takuwakan, something wonderful," they said, "the voice of Koska!"

Because of Tokala Noni, daughter of the Chief Yellow-Iron, Koska had gone with the Oglalas to Medicine Dance Buttes, whither they had moved for the annual buffalo hunting. During two moons the Brulé had been the guest of Running Antelope. Though he had made his preference for the maiden openly known Tokala Noni had shown him no favour.

Several times each day he walked to and fro passing the teepee of Yellow-Iron. Dressed in the bravery of a Sioux gallant, he had often waited beside a coulée water path. But the maiden had failed to smile on him from the teepee doorway, and she only fetched water in the company of other girls, or of the women of her family.

Sometimes the teasing ones would say to Tokala Noni, "See him, this pretty Brulé with the strange voice; he indeed wishes to speak with you!" On such occasions Tokala would draw her blanket more closely about her head or turn her face away, ignoring the remark and the cause of it.

Yellow-Iron and his wife had secretly been pleased that Koska was looking toward their daughter.

Having allowed for the natural reserve of a Dakota maiden they began, also secretly, to feel some impatience. Tokala Noni was good to look upon. She might choose her teepee among the Oglalas; but there was no young man among these, not even the son of Spotted Tail, who could give, without impoverishing himself, a great number of ponies to his wife's relatives. Yet the father and mother could say nothing, nor appear to notice the Brulé's apparent courtship, until himself should speak openly.

It was at the beginning of the dry-grass moon that Koska signified his desire to marry Tokala Noni. He spoke to an Oglala friend, who carried his message to a friend of Yellow-Iron. After this the chief talked to his wife about the matter.

When the two were alone one day the Buffalo Woman spoke to her daughter. "Thus," she said, "we have heard it said that Koska wishes to speak with you and it is good that you do not avoid this young man."

And Tokala knew that she must give an answer or be spoken of as a stubborn and perverse daughter, a trial to her parents. She had the strong pride of her race, wishing to appear to advantage. Her little barbaric heart was sorely tried. She sat upon a rush mat in her own corner of the teepee, and she drew her blanket about her head and wept bitterly.

"Is this young man so poor then that you despise him?" asked the troubled mother.

The girl mingled reproaches with her sobs. "It is thus, all the time," she wailed, "you—and the others—you indeed wish me to choose a man—who is possessed of an evil spirit!"

The Buffalo Woman paused in the work she was doing and stared at her daughter in astonishment. All the occult forces, so potent with the child of nature, stirred within her. Now she suddenly remembered things. She began to put this and that together. She saw that her daughter had, for a long time, acted strangely—she had been silent when she should have spoken—she had shown a sober face when others laughed and now she wept when another girl would have been proud and pleased, however much she might wish to conceal the fact. Such conduct had hitherto been unheard of and, being unnatural, was mysterious and matter for apprehension until it might be understood.

In silence the Buffalo Woman passed out of her teepee. Troubled at heart she went to the lodge of a medicine woman, who was the grandmother of medicine priests. This aged and very wise woman was known to have had communication with spirits of the upper and under worlds and with those of birds and beasts. By these tokens she foretold

events and divined the presence and occult manifestations of the evil ones.

To this medicine-god-woman Buffalo Woman told of her talk with Tokala Noni, and all that her daughter had said. This wise woman sat for a time in silence. She lighted her mystery pipe and blew smoke alternately from either thin nostril. After a time she spoke.

"During two moons," she said, "I have observed this young man of the Brulés. It appears to me that he speaks with the black wolf's voice, but I do not yet know that this is certainly true. If it be true, it is an evil thing. Go to, my daughter, I will discover about this. To-night our young men dance to Wimima (the full moon), and I think something mysterious is desiring to speak truth to the Oglalas. Go now to your teepee, daughter, and do not plague my granddaughter further in this matter."

Buffalo Woman returned to her lodge. Stricken with the fear of mysterious things, she felt very sure that her daughter had been evilly besieged. She desired now to comfort Tokala and so she said, wishing to calm the girl's fears:

"Cease to weep, my daughter. I have spoken with the wise one and it does not now appear that your father will wish to give you to this good-for-nothing Brulé."

Tokala looked at her mother in amazement. "He is a very good young man," she replied with heat, "but he is unfortunate. He does not wish to speak always thus—in a strange voice." Whereat her mother marvelled much but said nothing.

At the going down of the sun mystery men began beating the huge elk-skin drum of their craft. Its heavy, rhythmic roll, thundering in the barbaric double time of the Orient, could have been heard far out upon the prairie and deep within the cañons of the Smoky River breaks. There was suppressed excitement among the lodges. The people knew that their young men were to dance the moon dance.

Fires were kindled near the medicine pole, whither four young men came beating the drum. These seated themselves cross-legged and, as they wielded their sticks, they chanted the wi-mimbe song.

The people gathered; their faces were lighted with excited interest and expectation. They formed in groups and squatted upon the ground, the young within the circle of their elders. Boys brought bundles of fagots for the fires. Then the dancers came by ones and twos from their teepees. The drum beat high and the maze of the moon dance was on.

Each dancer was arrayed in such individual and fantastic costume as the wild rider of the plains was

able to achieve. Twoscore of them, whirling about the mystery pole, made a brave and exhilarating show. They danced in impossible postures and, as they shuffled and leaped, they chanted the song of their dance in weird and minor cadences which penetrated to all the recesses of the barbaric soul.

As the sun fell under the earth and the world of night came on from the east fires were piled high and their red glow filtered a magic and potent medicine for the dancers. They sang to Wakinyan, god of thunders, chanting prayers for vigour of heart and strength of limb to endure.

Koska, naked to the breech-cloth, danced the entrancing muscle dance. His face was turned upward; his eyes, showing the under whites, were fixed upon some absorbing vision of the upper world. Every muscle of his strong, lithe body played in complex, sinuous movement, astonishing for freedom of action; and the tiny bells and spangles upon his leggins and his moccasin heels shook out music in perfect keeping with that marvellous dance of the flesh.

The people were amazed. "Han! Han!" they exclaimed, and "Hopidansni! Is it not wonderful? Did you ever see any one dance thus?"

The wise medicine-god-woman sat somewhat apart from a group. For a long time her eyes were fixed

intently upon Koska. Then she turned her gaze downward and muttered under her breath. She consulted her sacred medicine-bag which contained the fetiches of her clan—the foot of a magpie, the dried tongue of a screech-owl, and a red, perforated stone from the springs of Miniskanskan. This medicine-bag was secreted beneath the folds of her blanket and, when she prayed to it, her eyes were turned inward. She had also an image of the yellow thunder bird and she prayed to this and shook her medicine rattle, calling upon the mysterious spirits of earth and air.

Presently the dance grew more violent. Koska outdid all his former efforts. He believed that Tokala Noni must now indeed be looking at him, therefore he danced to her. His exertions went to the point of frenzy. He leaped like a stricken deer and the noises which issued from his throat were superhuman. He lifted his voice in a series of strange cries which rose above the clatter of drum, the jangle of bells, and the whoops of his fellows, as the notes of a cornet quaver above the boom of an orchestra. The people looked at each other and spoke together in low voices.

"Do you hear?" one asked another.

The medicine-god-woman arose slowly, leaning upon a lance staff. Her thin face, thrust forward in

the firelight, took the shape of a vulture's beak. She cackled shrilly.

"Hececa! Hececa! Sunk-sapa! sunk-sapa!" she screamed.

Her high-keyed cachination reached the nearer groups of onlookers and they understood that the spirit of a black wolf had entered the body of Koska. Thus he danced, defying the laws of the flesh, and thus he cried with a voice not his own.

The medicine-god-woman turned her face toward her teepee and passed into the unlit night. People arose from the group she had quitted and distributed themselves among the crowds of onlookers to whom they interpreted the words of the wise woman.

Then, as the Brulé leaped and danced, keeping his gaze fixed upon the upper world, he was abandoned. Young and old, the people arose and went in silence to their teepees. One by one the dancers filed away into the darkness. The tattoo of the drum ceased, and presently Koska, perspiring and exhausted, found himself dancing to the jangle of the bells upon his leggins.

When the sense of gross perception in a measure asserted itself the Brulé stood amazed and stricken with the awe of superstition. He threw a mop of hair back from his eyes and searched the narrow circle of firelight. Plainly there had been a mani-

festation of the Great Mystery. Snapping embers, enclosed in blank and silent spaces, replaced the brilliant flames, the leaping figures, and the throngs of firelit faces.

"Hoh!" muttered the Brulé, "Hoh! Hoh!" He felt his flesh growing cold; a chill struck through all his body and fear gripped his soul. A lean wolf-dog slipped across his narrow circle of lighted ground and its teeth clicked in a vicious snap at his legs. The man understood that he had been abandoned.

Somewhere within the blackness, beyond the glimmer of teepee tops, he felt the eyes of the medicine-god-woman upon him. Creeping, chilly pains searched his vitals. He squatted low over a heap of live coals. Over this fire, sacred to Wimima, he prayed. He turned his face to the spirits of the upper world and saw strange things. He saw stars dancing and the winged sweep of thunder birds in their midst. He prayed to these people to have pity upon him; and, after a time, he arose strengthened in limb and spirit. He walked to his teepee, striking at the dogs which snapped at his heels.

He entered his lodge—beside that of Running Antelope—and took therefrom his blankets, bow and arrows, saddle and trappings. Then, walking very straight with his burden, he went out among the pony herds. He returned through the village, lead-

ing a string of horses which he tethered—save one—in front of Yellow-Iron's teepee.

"My heart is good," he muttered. "My heart is good."

Leading his saddle pony he trod slowly a cañon path which mounted to the far heights of the river breaks. He shivered now and then and his pony turned its head frequently to launch an inquiring whinny into the valley.

Koska had advanced some bow-shots amid the deep shadows when suddenly the figure of a person stood in his path, a small, slim person, so dimly outlined that the Brulé halted, at some steps, deeming that he saw one of the shadow people of the mysterious world. He stood at gaze and was convinced. He began to pray to this mysterious one.

"Listen, hear me," he said, "you that are of the ghost world. Have great pity upon me that people may not any more turn their faces away from me."

There was a birdlike swoop of movement which did not startle, but interrupted, and a Dakota maiden stood beside the speaker. She let her blanket drop from face to shoulders.

"Pray not to me," she said. "It is I, Tokala Noni." Her voice was soft and low and pitiful.

"My friend," said the Brulé, "now I indeed know that you have a soft heart. After all you do not

shun me. I have left ponies with Yellow-Iron. Is it good?"

"They will not that I should dwell in your teepee," murmured the maid, "therefore I have come to speak with you. Thus, you should take away your ponies that I may not have shame."

"What I have done I have done," Koska made answer. He opened the folds of his blanket and, for a moment, the maiden stood with face against his breast. Then she gently put him away and passed quickly from his sight.

The Brulé looked long into the blank spaces whither she had vanished. His horse nickered plaintively. The young man caught his breath in a deep sigh and again took up the cañon trail. After threading dark and laborious mazes he came to the level of the breaks and was projected into the upper world where a vast, misshapen ball of red fire was beginning to heave itself out of the earth. This was Wimima, the dry-grass moon, which the mice were beginning to gnaw.

Koska prayed to this moon, which is wife to the sun, and therefore a powerful person.

"Ohe, ohe, Wemima-sa! Hear me, red, red moon! Listen, O woman of the sky. I desire greatly that the people shall not turn their faces away from me. Hear me, pity me, and I shall thereafter do your

will. Thirty pieces of my skin I shall cut from my arms and breast when I am arrived among them peacefully."

Even as he spoke, Wimima heaved herself to a sitting posture upon the black rim of eastern horizon. Her vast, broad disk filled a greater angle than the near-by Butte of the Porcupine.

As Koska gazed in awed amazement, lo a wonder happened. A horseman appeared in sharp silhouette, riding upon the face of the moon. This celestial rider, whose horse appeared to have no legs, was followed by another and another. A crowding host blackened Wimima's face until, quite suddenly, she lifted her round disk and sank them into the spaces of the under world. Long the Brulé stood staring at the broad, clear moon. "Hoh!" he exclaimed, "Hoh-hoh! Hoh!"

Then, in mazy bewilderment of brain, he led his reluctant pony along the black rim of the breaks. At the head of a deep gorge he paused for a moment to gaze again, and fearfully, at that broad red moon, hanging low over the earth. Seeing no more of the mysterious horsemen, he descended into the cañon.

Deep within the shelter of a ledge he made fast his horse and sat upon the ground to meditate. A slight breeze rustled the boughs of the piñons. In the depths of the cañon an owl hooted, "Hu-hu!

Ahoo-ahu-hu!" Thus hinhan spoke and the Brulé listened intently. "Ahoo-ahu-hu!" vociferated the owl. Upon the heights a coyote answered, yapping dolorously at the red-faced moon.

What were these mysterious ones saying? These people of the earth and mid-air were certainly speaking to him, Koska. They were plainly calling to him, for they never spoke thus save to convey information to their brothers of the brown skin.

As the moon rose higher her light filtered into the cañon's upper depths touching the piñon tops. A magpie stirred, chattering with affright as its white wings flashed across a lighted space, and a blue jay shrieked as, in the hushed swoop of an owl, a spectre of death confronted its perch. A patter of light footfalls told also of the flight of manstin, the rabbit. Wraiths of things that hunt and are hunted flitted across the moonlit areas.

As these things befell, the Brulé sat and pondered heavily. Wimima rode high until her pale and ordinary face looked down upon the cañon's trail of sand, and she traced ugly shadows upon the opposing scarps.

Koska saw, as in a dream, the ghosts of things moving among the scattered pines. He muttered semi-conscious prayers and his petitions were addressed to the ghosts of things.

Thus he sat until the moon had slanted westward, and the shadow of cliffs fell upon the scarp in her front. He had not stirred, though his horse had, now and then, lifted its voice in remonstrant whinnyings, after which had followed the patter and scurry of startled feet. The rising sun might have found Koska still entranced, after his high craze of barbaric emotions but, afar up the cañon, there presently fell upon his ears the muffled klop-klop-klop of horses' hoofs—klop-klop-klop—unmistakably the guarded clatter of many hoof-beats.

The Brulé arose, stiffened and alert, and stood in a listening attitude. He had shed the spell of conjured obsession as an alarmed sleeper flings aside his blanket. The stirring of his horse, its pricked ears and low nicker of inquiry, gave instant testimony to his attitude. He stepped forward and, with a few quick turns of its rawhide rope, muzzled the animal's jaws. Again he held his ear to the cañon's depths. Nothing was heard save the pit-pat of small feet upon the pine needles. He advanced cautiously along the scarp until he stood upon a rim of the ledge which, like a broken battlement, loomed upon the slant, semi-illumined shadows of the gorge.

Between two jagged projections, leaning forward and clinging to the rock ledges with his hands, Koska peered steadily down upon a dim thread of sand

which marked the cañon's bottom. Thus bent he stood so motionless that the slant feathers upon his scalp-lock gave the appearance of a perched bird and a passing owl swooped, with a scared flop of discovery, at the point of attack.

The moon swung from behind a near butte, letting fall her light at a new angle, and slowly—for a little way—the sandy thread of the cañon's dry run was illumined. The Brulé sank upon his breast and lay upon a flat rim of rock, head downward, peering and listening. After a time his alert watchfulness was rewarded. Amid the upper glooms of the cañon's depths some figures appeared, dimly, and others came on, riding carefully that hoofs should fall in the sand. Hah! Akicitapi! Soldiers! soldiers of the Great Father! The last glimmer of fog lifted from Koska's brain. He saw as the owl sees. So, these blue legs, these squad hunters, who dared not go out singly to shoot at a buffalo bull, these pitiable liars and consumers of crazy waters, would strike at an Oglala village. As usual they wished to kill some women and children.

Files of horsemen advanced slowly until the foremost had reached a widened strip of sand bed, nearly opposite the water. Then a low "Halt" was sounded and the columns came to a stand.

The moon had again swung around so that its light

fell to the cañon's bottom. Ominous of evil intent the watcher saw four advance riders come together in a group. These talked in low tones that reached the Brulé's ear as a murmur from the under world.

Koska crept from his perch with the stealth of a cougar. Inch by inch he crawled away until he could, with safety, stand upright; then he climbed swiftly and softly steeps and piñon-clad scarps till he reached the prairie levels. Upon these heights he ran as the coyote runs until, from the topmost, he could look down upon the black pockets and lighted patches of the cañons and, through a wide gap, out upon the moonlit plain beyond the Sioux village.

* * * * * *

The long files of two cavalry troops waited in silence, in that state of divers emotions or lack of them, which precedes the supreme moment of assault. At the head of the column a major, his aides and two scouts, sitting a-saddle with their horses' heads near together, held a muttered consultation.

Dog Soldiers, inveterate hostiles of the Sioux and Cheyennes, had recently raided the overland trail and incidentally the government horse herds at Fort Laramie. These had led the pursuing troops a hot chase to northward and then, at an opportune moment, had scattered leaving no trace. But the chase

had resulted in accidental discovery of Yellow-Iron's village of Oglalas and the soldiers of the Great Father did not know one Sioux from another.

The situation of this big village on the flats of the Smoky River, close to covert of several cañon trails, offered peculiar facilities for the Custer mode of attack.

Possibly a Pawnee scout could have given a reason for the exposed position and secure quiescence of this Dakota town; possibly if all Sioux had not been hereditary enemies of his tribe his information would not have implicated Yellow-Iron's band. It is also even probable that the white scout of this expedition —stolid, taciturn skinner of buffaloes—withheld his opinion as to why the columns had been able to approach a Smoky River village without discovery. The man believed honestly that the only good Indians were dead ones.

Be this as it may a conference at the column's head resulted in a delay of thirty minutes. The officers remained in saddle, with horses' heads bunched, and they muttered jocular remarks to each other, protected from hearing by the soughing pines overhead. The privates sat in complete silence, most of them vigorously chewing tobacco.

The voices of the cañon were silenced by their presence until there broke upon the column's ears a quavering, high-keyed cry which stiffened each man

in his stirrups. The sound was repeated in various keys and rose and fell in a series of nerve compelling wails, unmistakably human, yet not unlike the ear-filling miauls of a mountain lion. Beyond doubt this unearthly music had its origin near the crest of a butte which loomed above the breaks alongside the slanting moon. The eyes of officers and men were turned in that direction.

The major pushed his horse close alongside that of his Pawnee scout. "How, John?" he queried just above his breath and the strange cries answered, dropping from the heights in quavering wails which were echoed eerily from rock to rock and scarp to scarp of the cañon.

The Pawnee sat with eyes aslant upon the butte. "Huh!" he grunted at length, "squaw heap holler. Becher life somebody pretty ——— dead, I guess."

"Right he is," affirmed the buffalo scout, "correct as hell."

"Can you make out what she's singing about?" asked the officer with anxiety.

"Naw," muttered the white scout. "I can savvy Sioux talk, but this is different—she's singin'—wailin' —jest no sense at all."

"John, can you go up and get her, fetch her down muzzled? No killing, mind you—no long-haired scalp!"

"Huh!" grunted the Pawnee. Under the flicker of moonlight his teeth gleamed across his face. He stripped to the breach-clout and moccasins and slipped, a reminder of the shadow of death, into the mouth of the coulée.

There followed a long silence at the cañon's bottom broken only by the sighing pines and the wailer's doleful music, which fitfully shrilled off the butte, by the hoots of owls or the muffled tramping of an uneasy and tightly reined horse.

At the column's head was much restlessness of spirit. The major frequently held the face of his watch to the moon and finally lighted a match under cover of his slouch hat. What in ——— was that Pawnee doing? The buffalo scout was damned if he knew. The moon crept lower—a full hour had been spent in waiting and the major shut his watch with a snap.

"We'll move," he growled, "Pawnee or no Pawnee."

His low order to advance would have passed but, in that instant, a loosened stone rattled over the face of the ledge and ricochetted to the cañon's bed, throwing sand against his cavalry boots. Further to rearward another boulder dropped with a racket which electrified the troopers.

No one spoke. For a space of ten seconds there

was the suspense of breathlessness. Then above and close to the column's head three or four dark figures emerged upon a moonlit scarp. These advanced a few paces and stood upon a flat rock twenty yards above the major's group.

"How, cola!" the voice was deep, sepulchral, noncommittal. The buffalo scout edged alongside his officer. "We're corralled," he announced in an even, commonplace tone. "Hell!" said the major. Instantly the scout turned to the newcomers, but his answer to an Indian greeting was interrupted.

"Halt! Silence!" The command rang sternly as troopers, seizing an inkling of the situation, began to drift toward the head of the column.

"How, cola!" again the deep, harsh tones, but with a ring of resonance. "How, cola!" responded the scout and, in the Sioux tongue, he asked: "Who are you?"

The answer was drawn to some length and its unintelligible accents smote upon the troopers' ears with a ring of premonition. At its conclusion the scout swore with a gentle vehemence, surprising for unwonted display of emotion. When he had found utterance in common speech he said:

"It's Yellow-Iron, major, an' he wants uncommon bad to know what troops are doin' here an'," he added in the same even, interpretative tone, "he's corralled

us here on both sides like buf'loes in a surround—we're bull beef if he lifts a finger."

The major reflected, while those nearest him sat in gaping silence. As an officer he suddenly saw his chance for glory and promotion in a narrowed perspective. He had not come out to fight like a wolf in a trap.

"Tell chief Yellow-Iron he's off his reservation," he instructed without committing himself. The scout rendered this information for the Sioux's benefit.

"We are here for the buffalo killing," was the reply. "We have that right by treaty with the Great Father."

The scout interpreted.

"Tell Yellow-Iron," said the major sternly, "that his young men have been killing people, not buffaloes, on the Platte."

A brief dialogue in the Sioux followed.

"The d——d old hair-lifter says you're a liar, and your father was a liar before yeh—all white men are liars," interpreted the scout.

The major laughed grimly. "He has the best of the argument," he remarked.

"Egsackly," admitted the scout.

"And men to the good."

"He holds four aces ——"

"And has the drop—I see," mused the major. "Well, tell Mr. Yellow-Iron we're glad to find good

Indians at Smoky River and will be glad of his help in trailing those Dog Soldiers who did the killing."

"Good," said Yellow-Iron in reply. "Tell your big general he will find those Dog Soldiers going toward the Bad Lands. I will send five scouts with him. Doubtless these will recover his horses."

II

THE FLIGHT

MANY birds of ill omen were seen flying above the Butte of the Porcupine. These hovered there during the early hours, often alighted and again soared aloft. At midday a cloud of them, sombre, silent, evil, sailed the blue ether circling high above the Sioux village. Under the noonday sun their shadows moved among the teepees and many of the people withdrew into their lodges.

"These evil ones are indeed too plentiful," muttered the elders. "These should not have appeared until after the buffalo killing." Those outside the teepees, of any necessity, moved frequently lest the shadows of the carrion eaters should fall on them.

"It is because of the white soldiers;" said the medicine-god-woman, "these will yet destroy us if we do not move away from here secretly. Because of these woman killers, also, the buffaloes do not come hither as formerly. Can any one now go to the sacred hill and call the buffaloes? Lo, there is much sweet grass to make medicine smoke and our callers have

burned this upon the hills and sung the sacred songs and the buffaloes do not come."

Her words were repeated to Red Cloud and Yellow-Iron, and the head men were called together in council. An aged chief spoke first.

"Listen," he said, "it is now three snows since the buffaloes came from the south, and this is because the white people have made a road which the buffaloes will not cross."

"Lo, my brothers," said Yellow-Iron, "I think that there is truth in this report. Even I have heard about this road which the buffaloes do not cross, but I think it is because the white hunters turn them back. These have a more powerful medicine than we, therefore the buffaloes are called to them. I think that we should now seek the elk in the country of the Scili. Behold, we are a large company and need not to fear the Pawnees."

A number spoke coinciding with what had been said or offering opinions in opposition. Some were for going north; others wished to push on westward. These last were of the younger leaders who spoke with eagerness and enthusiasm of a great hill country which the tribe had visited but once or twice in many years and which offered all the allurements of an unexplored region.

Red Cloud was the last to speak. When this grave

war chief arose there was marked attention. "Listen," he said. "In the north there is much snow, and if we find no buffaloes we shall suffer. Seeing that our people lack meat we cannot go to an unknown country; therefore let us go to the south as far as the Red River if need be. There we shall meet the Kiowas who are our friends and who will help us to find the buffaloes. There we can safely go peaceably with our women and children and the white soldiers will not attack us if we molest no one."

This talk was emphasized by frequent thumps upon a war-drum and in the end Red Cloud's plan was accepted. None of the grave counsellors made mention of the brooding fears which had fallen upon their village.

Nevertheless they broke camp after the world of night had fallen. Under the stars they trailed to the east so that, in their southward journey, they might avoid the raided trails of the upper country. It might be necessary to save all appearance of offense. Since the buffaloes had not come to them, they must go to the buffaloes.

Their village had been near to a fatal attack the night before. A mysterious voice calling to them in the night, the voice of one they had cast out, had saved them. They believed that the Brulé had been killed and the day had been one of an accumulation

of evil omens. Along the valley of the Smoky River they trailed the travoix.

The Buffalo Woman and her family rode in advance. Yellow-Iron had given all the ponies of Koska to his wife and Tokala, thus adding greatly to the ease, comfort and importance of their moving.

As they pushed on over the river trail the cavalcade became scattered. Fear departed from the people as they drew further away from their late camping ground. The exhilaration of moving was upon them, the joyous and hopeful emotion of those who go to seek a far country. And these, too, were setting their faces toward a land where the grim ice-god battles vainly with the sun.

For hours they travelled untiringly. Wimima, the full moon, was riding high when Tokala Noni, at the tail of a string of pack-ponies, stopped near some bushes to adjust her saddle cloth. As she dismounted a man, who had been riding at a little distance in her rear, also stopped and got off his horse. The girl noting this felt a thrill of uneasiness. But for this one person she was alone. She was about to climb upon her horse when the man, closely muffled in a blanket, approached her.

Then, as the girl sought to leap upon her pony, the animal shied and she turned to face the man who had come very near. She laid a hand upon her knife.

"My friend, do not fear me," said the muffled one in a voice which she instantly recognized as the Brulé's.

"Is it indeed you?" she asked in glad amazement. "A dream told our people that you had met the enemy; it is good that the evil birds have spoken falsely."

"The birds have eaten the flesh of a dog of the Pawnees;" said Koska proudly, "therefore they have lied. Come hither where none may see us talking. I wish to speak with you."

They stepped into cover of the bushes where they stood, each holding a horse.

"When I saw your village moving away," said the Brulé, "I wished to inquire whither you were going. To the others I might not speak until I had proved myself."

"You saved our people from attack of the white ones," said Tokala, sadly, "yet they do not mention your name. You must speak quickly for some one will come to look for me. What would you?"

"I wish you not to give yourself to any man," replied Koska, "till I shall come among your people with honour. I go to take horses and scalps of the Susuni."

For a moment the maiden stood in silence. Her face was bent low and her figure drooped slightly

toward the man at her side. The near beat of horses' hoofs startled her and she leaped upon her pony. Then, bending toward her lover, she spoke in a voice low and soft, sweet as the murmured cooing of a dove.

"I am but a young girl," she said, "and who shall decide who will take me to dwell in his teepee? Doubtless our people will give you much honour when you shall come among them fetching many horses and scalps; but miye, I am not of those who love war. I do not think there are evil birds talking among the Brulés. My friend, you have need of the bold heart."

Like the music of a rippling brook, but with a current of deep and thrilling import, this low-voiced talk fell upon the ear of Koska. The prize of a wife by capture was surely awaiting did he choose to leap at the advantage. He stood with clenched teeth and a heart thumping at his ribs and roaring in his ears as loudly as the beat of a tom-tom.

For a moment there was a fierce struggle between love and ambition, fiercer than any the civilized heart can conceive of, between the desire to possess and the barbaric pride of a warrior.

The Brulé had been cast out by this girl's people, evilly advised as he believed, envious of his powers as a dancer. He had saved their village from attack

and they knew it. His heart was bitter against them and he desired to return among them as a great warrior, greater than their greatest, and so compel their admiration and triumph over them.

Already he had killed an enemy in a fierce hand to hand struggle upon the butte. The scalp of a Pawnee scout hung at his belt and the lust of war, the desire for a name among men, was upon him. Should he not prove himself before this envious people and should they not freely give him the maiden of his choice? Thus he hesitated, the prey of hot and contending desires.

Then quite suddenly, in the heat of his battle with passion and pride, the maiden stiffened in her saddle, struck her horse a stinging blow with the quirt and was off in the flight of a night bird.

The Buffalo Woman had halted and was calling lustily when Tokala, coming up, answered the anxious mother that she had stopped to mend a saddle girth. The girl was glad of the friendly darkness which sheltered a face hot with shame and resentment.

III

THE TEST

DURING seven suns the Brulé rode to the northwest. At noon of the eighth he mounted a high ridge in the bad lands of Inyan Wakan. Upon a crowning point of the ridge stood Inyan Wakan himself, sacred Mystery Rock of the Oglalas. This was the Mecca of the young warrior's first pilgrimage. Hither he had come to make gifts to Grandfather Inyan, to fast and pray and to dream and see visions, portents of good or of evil.

He had made this journey solely on report, but far away he had seen the gray-white rock, clean cut against the sky, keeping a silent and mysterious guard over the wastes of the bad lands. There could be no mistaking the identity of this Rock of Mysteries which marked the limit and guarded the boundaries of a country which the Dakotas had won from the Absaroke. This was indeed the all enduring one, the one alone able, in a country laid waste by them, to stand against the spirits of thunder, wind and fire. Here, where the thunders and whirlwinds battled in the moons of rain and where the ever returning ice-god had his grip, so that life and vegetation were

destroyed, Inyan Wakan had withstood their attacks during lives beyond the mind of man to count.

As he advanced the Brulé saw, as he had been told, that all else had been laid low. Beyond Inyan Wakan there was no stone nor tree to mark the desolate waste as far as eye could reach. The spirits of the upper world had indeed made a lasting peace with Grandfather Inyan and he stood, as their representative, to be propitiated. Everywhere the land was marked as the abode of thunder spirits and the birthplace of whirlwinds.

These had laid their red and yellow paints upon all the hills. The lone rider saw also evidences of a great battle which the thunder people had, a long time since, fought with the under-water monsters. Huge bones of these creatures, turned to stone, were scattered among the hills. Upon a jutting promontory he stopped to view with breathless wonder the skeleton remains of a giant of the under-world, the back bone, as it appeared, of a creature which had measured half a stone's throw from head to tail. The immense vertebræ, broken apart at regular intervals, lay in a curved line along the crest of a spur and, as the Brulé looked down upon the fragments, his soul was filled with awe.

"Hun-hun-he!" he exclaimed, "here was one to swallow a tribe of people! The thunders may some-

times strike a Dakota when he has angered them but of a truth they have done our people a great service. But for these folk of the clouds no one I think would now be living."

At last he drew near to Inyan Wakan and, at a proper distance, dismounted and picketed his horse. He laid aside his shield and war weapons and stripped to the loin cloth. Then he anointed his hair and made an offering. He laid a bundle of sweet-grass on the ground and covered the heap lightly with small stones. Lighting the herbs he stood over the smoke of incense and made a prayer to the Most Mysterious. Having done this he painted his face in green and ochre and his body with yellow earths. He smoked to the four winds and chanted a sacred song with his eyes upon the zenith.

After a reverential period he approached Grandfather Inyan holding his pipe and medicine bundle before him. As he drew near he chanted a song sacred to the Rock of Mysteries.

"O Grandfather, I am coming,
O Grandfather, I am coming,
My father, the sun is looking,
My father, the sun is looking,
Até, heya lo, Até, heya lo."

He passed around the rock thus singing, his eyes

upon its gray and furrowed surface, until he paused before a sacred niche which was a shrine of Oglala offerings. Inside, upon the bed of a triangular notch, he saw the gifts of aspiring hunters and warriors who had come before him—stained feathers of the eagle tied to pipes of red stone, medicine rattles, amulets, bags of paint and curious images of wood and stone, gifts of highest value to the donours.

The Brulé untied his mystery bundle, a bag of parflêche containing his wotawé, or sacred charms. He took therefrom a beautiful necklace strung of copper beads and the hollowed bones of cranes' wings polished until they held the gleam of old ivory. This fine ornament he laid within the niche, placing it upon his red pipe which had its bowl carved to represent the head of sungmanitu the wolf.

"Grandfather, I give you these," he said bowing himself upon the rock. For a long time he stood with an ear against the hard surface and with closed eyes that he might the better catch any message from the spirits of mystery.

Hearing and seeing nothing he understood that his sacrifice had been of too slight a nature, that he must dance and fast and pray until such time as the mysterious ones should choose to listen. Therefore he prepared himself. He led his horse to a brook and picketed the animal among scant tufts of herbage.

An ablution in the stream cleared his body of paints, and when this was done he built a fire of dry sage bush, heated stones and sitting over these, within the covering of his robe, took the vapour bath.

Having a pure body and with his mind set upon sacred things he returned to Inyan Wakan, donned his paints and danced the wakan wacipi or sacred mystery dance. Dance and chant he continued until his voice sank to a whisper and his legs refused their office. He lay in a stupor of exhaustion until a late rim of moon rose above the hills.

Awakened by the near yapping of coyotes he sat in the pale moonlight, his flesh benumbed and his teeth clacking with the chill of a light frost. He had lain all night upon the bare earth without covering. This, however, was included in his discipline and he arose and resumed dancing.

During two suns he danced and slept. He took no nourishment but water and performed no errand, save to repicket his horse when thirst drove him to the brook. He prayed often to Inyan Wakan and the thunder spirits.

On the third night as he was dancing wearily he heard a voice saying plainly, "Lie down, lie down and keep your eyes shut."

He did as the spirit bade him and lo, suddenly all became light as day. He had returned to his mother

country and was become a boy again. On the bank of the Turtle Hill River he sat, dangling his feet in water and wriggling his toes that he might attract small fish within reach of his reed spear.

While idling thus he was aroused by the near whoops of Pehan the sand-hill crane. Ho-ho! it was the season of young cranes just before they learn to fly. He seized his bow and blunt-end arrows and hurried through the tall grass. Near a hill he saw the cranes. Two old ones were fighting with a coyote to preserve their young. Near by the heads of three young birds were seen amid the wagging grass which tangled their legs in running. Seeing his opportunity the young hunter ran in pursuit and captured all the birds.

When he had killed their young the old ones flew away; but the coyote approached to the top of a near mound and sat upon his tail.

"Come hither, my friend, I wish to speak with you," the coyote called, very pleasantly.

"Oho, Miyacca!" cried the boy, "I know you very well. You think you are very smart but some other folk know as much as you do. You cannot steal from me, so you had better go about your business."

And now the overwrought brain of the dreamer was crowded with visions. The coyote and the boy disappeared and out of the shifting panorama of wild

life and out of its curious imaginings and from nowhere that men wot of pictures, vividly realized, succeeded each other in swiftly moving scenes.

An eagle flew low down, shrilly screaming, and a thunder bird, darting lightnings, followed in pursuit. Stampeding buffaloes rained out of the sky and the dreamer cowered beneath their hoofs. A flight of fiery arrows—the heyoka man—a yellow bird with a blue crest—a thousand small dancing devils of infinite variety in shape—a travois running away with a horse—a spirit woman of the sky—ghosts of the under-world—a red whirlwind spinning tops off the hills—all these he saw and other flitting scenes with no drop of curtain between the acts.

Suddenly he saw his heart's desire standing at a little distance. Upon her face and in her eyes was a provoking smile of invitation. Instantly he darted after her and the maiden fled looking back and mocked him with shrill laughter. For many bow-shots he followed vainly until, at last, the girl vanished, going into a hole in the earth. Into this hole he followed her and found himself face to face with Miyacca and his family.

"So-ho!" said the coyote, "thus you have come to me in the end. Very well, you shall have my eldest daughter for your wife and you shall dwell with us where you will have plenty to eat."

At daybreak the Brulé came out of his trance and pondered these things. So many visions were confusing and his scattered senses wrought vainly with them till the pangs of hunger drove him to seek his store of meat.

IV

WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK

DEEP within the heart of a mountain chain, and sunken to the level of a soil rich with vegetation, lay the valley of a stream skirted by the lodges of the Susuni.

Following far the trail of buffalo hunters, the Brulé had come upon this seat of his ancient enemies. On a certain afternoon in the moon of ripe plums he lay in hiding on a mountainside and looked down upon the scattered village, and upon its pony herds grazing among the foot-hills. The teepees were mere gray points dotting the grasslands; the horses were as ground squirrels; and men moved as insects among them.

Here verily was much good spoil resting in the security of a stronghold. Long and eagerly the Brulé gazed, his eye taking in every detail in the contour of the valley, conning its exits and entrances. All his judgment and his cunning were summoned in planning a coup against these old enemies of the Sioux, and he saw that there was cover in infinite measure for the climber and footman. Bodies of horsemen would have found it impossible to attack

this Susuni town successfully. Even a single horseman could not have approached unobserved and the Sioux had turned his pony loose at the distance of half-a-day's march.

The Susuni had moved into this valley through a single, narrow pass, and this cañon trail was guarded day and night by their lookouts. Thus much the Brulé had discovered in making a complete circuit of the mountains which surrounded their big straggling village. And he had now obtained the best possible point of vantage from which to overlook the whole ground of their stronghold. He had never seen a village so favourably situated to furnish spoil for the forays of a single crafty foe.

He might not take the Susuni horses, but he saw with certain eye his opportunity to waylay stragglers and hunters from the village, to attack them from cover, making good his retreat. So he planned after the manner of his kind. He would be patient, unobserved, like the fish-hawk not stooping to strike until sure of his prey, and the mountains should furnish him safe eyrie of retreat.

As he lay watching the movement of life at the village all the war-blood stirred in his veins. He lived again his fight with and victory over the Pawnee scout. Again he heard the stealthy approach, a faint stir of pine needles under the moc-

casined feet, the feathered rustle of small bush unseen and so touched in the darkness, sounds the white man's ear trumpet would scarce have gathered. These tiny rustlings his ear, intent upon the movements of the soldiers, had caught and he crouched behind a rock and waited like the long yellow cat of the mountains.

Presently he saw the crested head of the scout cautiously framed amid a growth of pencil cedar. Ha! this one was cunning in some ways, but he thought himself spying upon a woman engaged in mourning for her dead!

Again the hiding one lifted his voice in a sexless wail and chanted a dirge for the dead. The feathered scalp-lock vanished amid the cedar bush and there was a period of thrilling silence.

Then, gripping his knife, the Brulé once more poured out his soul in a series of quavering wails. His eye was set upon the top of the boulder behind which he stooped. He thought not to be taken by surprise but the Pawnee's leap was the quick pounce of a coyote. Koska barely caught the enemy's wrist as his knife-arm was thrust downward. Together they had rolled upon the ground, where they writhed and twisted until the Brulé had turned his knife upon the soft parts and cut the Pawnee's body half in two. This scout had foolishly worn his broad

belt, with the totem of the Great Father, over a shoulder and under an arm. Huh! he should have known better.

For the hundredth time perhaps the Brulé unfastened the scalp-lock which hung at this same belt. The single tuft of long hair, with a basis of scalp of the size of a silver half-dollar, wanted but a facing of beaded buckskin, a ribbon and a stained eagle's feather, to become a beautiful ornament. Several times this cherished trophy, catching upon bush or briar, had nearly been wrenched from its buckskin fastenings. Yet, though no one but Tokala Noni had seen him as the wearer, the Brulé's vanity would not permit him to carry it within the safer folds of his medicine pouch.

Dangling at his soldier's belt it gave him the sense of being a warrior, ready at any moment to strike an enemy; and that enemy, should one chance to spy upon him, would be the less bold to attack because of this visible token of his prowess. It was his outward insignia of rank, even as the shoulder piece of a Long-Knife captain.

A long time the Sioux sat gazing upon his trophy, living over his one exploit in war. Then as the shadows gathered he crept away like a cougar to his lair and disposed himself for the night.

For two suns he spied upon the Susuni camp,

eagerly watching to note the going out of hunters among the hills. Evidently there was much meat in their teepees; in all this time he saw only stray parties of women and young folk picking berries among the hill coulées. He had not come out to make war upon women and children and so possessed his soul in patience.

On the evening of the second day, however, a fog arose in the mountain valley. A silver thread of the creek was first obscured, then the fringe of teepees, willow thickets and trees vanished and finally the lower hills with their grazing herds.

The Sioux bestirred himself. He descended through a thicket of quaking asp to the bed of a cañon. Along this he followed, stepping from stone to stone, or picking the hard-baked soil to walk on. In this manner he approached the foot-hills and came within the cloak of their fog.

For some time he trod cautiously among the grazing ponies, seeing no one. He had wrapped his blanket about his head, letting its folds drop to the knees, and thus prowled among the herds looking at and admiring many fine ponies. Suddenly, when such appearance was least expected, the figure of a man took shape in the mists—a very large and fleshy man with a rawhide rope in hand.

This man was looking for some wary horse which

could best be snared in the fog. He held his lariat ready to throw and was searching diligently among the herds. The Brulé shuffled on with assumed indifference and the man, evidently mistaking the muffled figure for a stroller from the village, approached and began to speak in a tone of friendly inquiry.

Seeing that he must certainly be discovered the Sioux flung aside his blanket and leaped at the big Susuni, swinging his hatchet for a stroke. If he had thought to find a sluggish fighter, in so big and heavy a man, Koska was instantly undeceived. With the lithe leap of a fox the Susuni bounded aside and his ready rawhide slapped the Brulé's cheek and closed over an arm and shoulder. Another astounding leap and a jerk which would have wrenched a sapling from its roots and the Sioux was flung headlong upon a hill-slope. The breath was knocked from his body and for a moment he lost consciousness.

He came to his senses to find the enemy dragging him ignominiously down a hill and looking back with contemptuous jollity. A wide grin of triumph cleft the man's fat face. So! this fat eater of snakes thought no more of snaring a Sioux warrior than he would of taking a rabbit! The man proposed to drag him, Koska, with a Pawnee scalp at his belt, into his

village to be spit upon by women and children! The Brulé's tomahawk was gone; his bow he had flung aside with his blanket; one arm was pinned to his side but the other hand was free and his knife was in its sheath.

Presently the Susuni began the descent of a steep, rocky pitch. He chuckled with evil glee as he jerked his captive roughly after him and he had no more fear upon his grinning face than if he had been hauling a harmless snake. What a tale for the Susuni village!

Seeing an opportunity the Sioux suddenly hunched his shoulder against a rock and, in a momentary check of progress, whirled his feet forward and thrust them against a boulder. The big man laughed yet more heartily and gave a mighty tug, straining forward and sidewise. In the wink of an eyelid the Sioux whipped his knife and slashed the braided rawhide. The careless and exultant giant tumbled headlong, clutching at space, and in two leaps the Brulé was upon him. A single thrust severed the bones of the Susuni's neck and he lay as harmless and as still as the stones he had fallen across.

The young Sioux's wire-strung muscles, his quick eye and his perfect training, had done the business. Standing Elk, his mother's brother, had taught him the leaping stroke and many old parflêches and bags,

stuffed with dry grass, had been cut to pieces in those lessons.

As the Brulé raised himself and stood above the fallen man his first thought was of his uncle and this early practice. "Hau!" he said. "My uncle taught me well; see, I hit the neck here exactly as I used to hit his blue marks on the grass bags. Hau! it was well done."

He did not exult over his stricken foe; instead he greatly admired the man's proportions, the vast muscles of his thigh, breast and forearm. And this big Susuni had been a brave man, swift in action and unerring with his lariat. The young brave's heart swelled with pride as he realized in the man's proportions, his dress and qualities, the importance of his own deed. Not only was the Susuni of immense size, but his highly ornamented breech-cloth and moccasins, his fine necklace and armlets, proclaimed him a man of distinction among his fellows. That he had been a warrior, absolutely fearless, had been sufficiently proven.

With great care the Brulé unwound the man's long braids selected and secured a tuft of hair which was to become his chief adornment and mark of distinction. A necklace strung of elk's teeth and Navajo silver beads—the prize of a life's effort—he untied

from the warrior's breast. "Hoh!" said the Brulé. "Hun-hun-he!"

When he had admired this and the arm bracelets and bestowed them upon his person he returned to the hill, secured his hatchet, blanket and bow, and again courted the mists and mystery.

It was a good time for the man-hunt. As he stalked with head enfolded and weapons concealed in his blanket he heard voices calling here and there upon the hills, now near, now far away. Men were out looking for their ponies, to gather them in lest they be spirited away in the clouds. He knew the callers were men; for boys and women seldom go among the hills when a cloud lies on the earth. Only men who have powerful wotawé may do this.

Hearing voices near and coming toward him at last, he halted and listened intently until he made out that two men were riding together and going to the village. He shifted his position a little and then stood solemnly erect, close muffled in his blanket.

It is not the custom to speak to or notice those who stand thus apart and when two men, riding a single horse, passed within a few paces they continued talking together, paying no heed to the vigil of a solitary.

As they rode on the Brulé dropped his blanket and

fell in behind. He walked rapidly and, coming very close, drew his bow and, fetching the arrow's notch to his ear, transfixed the riders. They fell to the earth and died. The hunter of men took their scalps and thrust at their bodies contemptuously with his foot. A pair of fools these!

Darkness was now falling and, hearing no more voices nor seeing any one, the Sioux betook himself to the mountains. Once out of the region of the fog he again became a wary hider of his trail. He picked his way to the far heights with infinite care and patience, keeping his body always covered from the view below. Within the shelter of timber he jumped from stone to stone, from log to log, zigzagging like a hunted fox.

He did not cease these tactics until far into the moonlit night, and he had made a full half circuit of the Susuni town. Then far up in the mountains, upon the crest of a ridge and under the shadows of a great pine, he made his night bivouac. At this favoured spot his eye could command every avenue of approach.

Up to this moment all his energies had been taxed to their utmost tension in making a blind trail, an absolutely safe and mysterious retreat. Although his ears had been pricked to the sounds, he had heard no shout or tumult which must have followed the dis-

covery of his deeds. On this height, within the tent-like shelter of the pine, he felt safe from pursuit at last.

Here he had leisure to feel the thrill of triumph. And he had done quite enough to make his renown as a warrior, to give him a name even among far tribes of men. He had only to make good his retreat to his own people and the story of his lone expedition, his single hand stroke at the Susuni, would be told at a thousand camp-fires from the great rivers to the mountains. Like a current of rare old wine in the veins his elation tingled to the finger tips.

"I am a warrior," his heart sang, "I, even I, am great among those who have gone against the enemy. Will the Oglalas now shun me? Will they not speak of Koska in the teepees? Shall I not seek my own among them?"

Over his head a great owl alighted, booming its weird night cry among the hills. In Hinhan's whooping notes there sounded the pæon of victory to which his own swelling throat dared not give utterance. For caution yet held him in its grip, that he might live to tell of his deeds and display his trophies. And this, even though his lithe body writhed upon the ground in restraint of his desire to shout and dance.

Whoo-ahu-ahoo-ahu! hu! Surely this was a voice of the upper world chanting the deeds of a warrior,

unmatched for cunning and prowess. Almost, while he exulted, he feared the loud whoopings of Hinhan might be heard by the Susuni.

Then other voices and sounds of the night filled his ears—the barking of a fox—the startled whistle of a deer—the heavy scramble of some animal upon a mountain slope—the shrill trilling of pine locusts—the far-off whinny of a horse. And the Brulé lay like a cougar, crouchant, taking note of these night voices.

In the end, hearing nothing to alarm, there came a moment when he could no longer abate his desire for action and he arose and danced under a pine tree. He offered a pipe to the four winds, to earth and sky and, under his breath, chanted his thanks to Grandfather Inyan and the thunder spirits. For these, beyond question, had lent to his eye its certainty of aim and to his arm the might to strike.

He danced until his legs were weary; then wrapped his blanket about him, trusted himself to Mother Earth and to his sacred charms, and slept.

He awoke when the Great Father of earth had begun to put red paint upon her mountain tops. He gazed for a moment in wonder at pine-clad peaks tipped with the red blush of dawn, and at fire clouds lowering above which seemed inverted prairies of flame. Marvellous and mysterious was the wonder-world of morning!

But hunger, masterful and urgent, claimed his attention. He had eaten nothing since the sun had risen yesterday. He arose and, with bow and arrow fitted, trod softly among the pines.

His hunt, unsuccessful at first, carried him many bow-shots into the mountains; then a young deer leaped from its bed in his front and stood to gaze at the intruder. A boy could have aimed the shaft which struck it down. Another favour of the high powers. Though suffering from hunger the Sioux carried his game further, threading an intricate maze of cañons with carefully picked footsteps.

When he had secured a covert of quaking asp, a mere cluster of small growth under a ledge from which his eye could scan all points of approach, he halted and ventured to make a fire. Dry sticks of quaking asp burn with a clear flame, giving off neither smoke nor odour. Over this smokeless fire the Brulé half-roasted strips of deer's meat and ate until his stomach was rounded.

After he had eaten he bent small saplings of aspen, tying their tops together to form curing racks and upon the bows of these hung his venison, cut to thin slices that it might dry quickly in the sun. By the morning of another sun he would be able to tie all this meat in a light bundle.

Having done this he placed his war trophies in

a heap, along with his wotawé or sacred charms, and seated himself cross-legged before them. He took count of his treasures, four scalps, a wonderful necklace of elk's teeth, the mazaska beads of the Navajo, the revolver, belt and cartouche case of the Pawnee, an earring of yellow iron, a large knife with iron guards which he had also taken from the Pawnee. With this strong, keen-pointed knife he had struck the big Susuni. These and other trinkets of less account filled his eyes and his thoughts for a long time.

Often he gazed upon his three amulets, a black stone turtle of diminutive size encased in beaded buckskin, an eagle's claw tied with red ribbon, and a small pipe of blue stone which his grandfather had taken from a slain Arapaho. Which of these had been most powerful in aid of gaining his war treasures? Until the sun rode high his reverent mind was occupied with repeating prayers of thanks and with próblems of occult and religious nature.

His reveries were broken in upon by the explosive and near-by cawing of crows. He looked up in alarm to see a crowd of these conspicuous and noisy birds gathering among the small tree tops, where they squalled remonstrantly and hungrily eyed his strips of meat.

"Hinnu!" he cried, in excess of disgust and alarm, "I am but a young warrior yet!" and his spirit was suddenly depressed at this evidence of his singular lack of judgment. The infinite pains he had been at to conceal his trail were no longer of avail. By this time Susuni scouts were posted upon the mountain tops. These would already have seen the flight of crows winging straight to his covert and would have said, "Ho! the enemy has killed some large animal. After all the man is but a fool who has for once been fortunate."

"Hinnu! Hinnu!" the exclamations were deep, guttural and contemptuous of himself. While he muttered his disgust he worked swiftly, gathering and adjusting his weapons and treasures. He took enough meat for two or three days' rations and kicked the rest into an open spot where the birds could quickly consume it; then he crawled out of the copse and began his retreat, crouching beneath the ledge. Passing around the rocks to an opposite slope he went down the mountain, leaping like a goat from rock to rock.

Fear urged his flight—fear lest death or capture should overtake him before his deeds should be recounted among Dakotas. Having left open sign of his recent whereabouts he continued to mutter as he sped calling himself witkotko, a crazy fool. Deep

into his barbaric consciousness pricked the lesson of the hour.

Down, down the mountain he fled. Here upon a stony slope he could not take heed to hide his trail. Bushes crackled, stones broke loose and rattled upon his heels, thumping past and ricochetting upon the steeps below. A deer, startled from its feeding, sailed away to the right showing its black-tipped flag in wide curves above the bush lands. At the head of a gulch a gray bear and her cubs disputed his right of way and the runner avoided them, going by at a pace which drew a glare of astonishment from the bristling trio.

His feet were shod with hard soles, leather of the bull elk's skin, and as leaper and runner he vied with the mountain ram. And the fear which lent him such perilous speed was the fear of pride; his reputation with himself was at stake. He had struck in secret and left a mystery behind. Should the enemy discover him, half the joy and much of the fame of his exploit would pass.

For hours he fled, running tirelessly until he had put behind him an intricate maze of trail, sufficient to employ the most skillful of trackers for at least two suns.

Then he slept and spent the following day in search and recovery of his horse. Mounted he set

his face toward the Missouri River and his own Brulé village.

Though he sought the covered ways, thinking to avoid further risks, he had to pass through the country of the Absaroke and one day, in turning the curve of a narrow valley, he came suddenly upon a camp of hunters. Three men were cooking meat upon a creek's bank and five ponies were picketed on the grass-lands a little below.

Discovery was mutual and instantaneous. In a breath and upon a sudden, fierce impulse the Brulé jerked his revolver from its holster and charged. The hunters, thinking that a war party was close upon the heels of this attack, ran wildly after their horses. In a trice the Sioux was up with the hindermost. When he had emptied the barrels of his revolver two men were stretched upon the ground. The other mounted a pony and fled and the Brulé, having a well worn animal, did not attempt pursuit.

Having counted coup upon their bodies, he stood over the fallen in the stature of a man and of a warrior of high deeds. "Now truly," he said, "the Oglalas shall know that I am one favoured of Wakan Tanka."

He scalped the Kangi, took their weapons and ponies and rode homeward, going at a hard pace all night. The horses he had taken were not of the

best, yet he pushed them on with little rest for two suns. On the third night, believing himself well beyond the reach of pursuit, he rested.

He lay in a deep sleep until after sunrise and then awoke to find himself disarmed and in the hands of the Kangi. The Absaroke had been swift in pursuit and their village not far from the hunters' camp. The Brulé's little horse herd had wandered to a distance and so had given no alarm of the approach.

Seeing that he was hopelessly trapped, though unfettered as yet, the Sioux arose calmly and folded his arms. He was a warrior and ready to accept war's fortunes. A half score of mountain Crows stood about him. They displayed no anger but rather looked upon the young man and his array of scalps admiringly.

"Hau! hau!" they exclaimed to one another. They talked together for a time in low voices and in a strange tongue and presently seated themselves in a semicircle about their captive.

At this mark of respect the Sioux's heart beat quickly; a sudden dark flush suffused his face. He was not astonished when one, by signs and in that trade language known of all the plain's tribes, invited him to tell the story of his recent exploits. These big mountain Kangi were known of all men as a peculiar people, fierce in war, but often showing marked

consideration and generosity in their treatment of captured enemies.

The honour of recounting his deeds to them offered compensation for all that they might do to him thereafter. Koska made the most of his opportunity.

He began slowly and impassively taking the liberty to walk back and forth before the Kangi after the manner of recounting deeds at the war dances. He used the common and limited vocabulary but supplemented this with vivid mimicry in the sign language.

From his discovery of the approach of the white soldiers he recounted in minute detail how he had spied upon them, how he had climbed stealthily to the top of a butte within hearing of the buffalo village where he had imitated, in a mysterious way, the wailing of a woman and thus had given warning to the Sioux pickets.

Seeing that the Kangi were very much impressed his manner warmed, his voice took on the chant of oratory, and his gestures became as a picture chart in telling of his hand-to-hand struggle with the Pawnee.

The oration was several times interrupted with expressions of approval. Koska had been trained from his youth in the folk-lore of the Brulé and, having gained the interest of an audience, knew how to hold it increasingly.

Time was of no moment. He had all there was. Therefore he narrated all the essential details of his journey to the country of the Susuni, cunningly framing them to the climax. He forgot that he was talking to enemies. When he told of his descent into the fog and of his fight with the big Susuni, omitting nothing of the latter's dexterity and momentary triumph with the lariat, and of his ruse in outwitting and killing the fool pony riders, the Kangi were overcome with generous appreciation.

"Hau—hau—hau!" they shouted, clapping their hands in acclaim. The Whites, the Pawnees and the Susuni were also their enemies and this man's series of successes put him at the pinnacle of a warrior's fame. And who could better tell of his deeds?

They knew he did not lie for he had the evidence of his prowess in hand and his story of attack upon their own hunters was but a repetition of what they had already known.

When he had finished the Brulé stood before them proudly, remembering that they were enemies. For a time the Kangi conferred together earnestly in their own tongue; then one spoke in the language mutually understood.

"We have seen," said this one, "that your tongue is straight. Hitherto for a long time the Absaroke and the Dakota have been enemies, which is a pity,

seeing they are cousins and have enough of enemies in common. Why should we hack and cut each other in pieces? The Blackfeet and Susuni are continually harassing us. The latter are crossing the mountains lately to drive us eastward. Come and help us to drive them back. You shall lead a party of our young men and you shall take horses of the Susuni and will thus be able to make presents to those whom you have bereaved among us."

As the Sioux listened to this general proposal his heart leaped against his ribs. Suddenly the visions he had seen at Inyan Wakan were thrust into his mind and he understood the import of his dreams. All their mystery had vanished and he stood, indeed, in the coyote's den.

"Good," he said. "I will lead your young men against the Susuni."

V

THE GATHERING OF THE CLANS

IN the valley of the Arkansas and within sight of the mountains the people were camped. The lodges of the Kiowas and Comanches were pitched somewhat above and opposite the villages of Red Cloud and Yellow-Iron. The teepees of these last were scattered along either bank of a small stream, fringed by willows and skirted by cotton-woods, and with hills in the near distance.

Into this country the southern herds, migrating by instinct to the region of the season's best grasses, had come to winter. And here, remote from any post or settlement of the invaders, and secure by force of numbers against attack from Ute or Navajo, the newly allied tribes had indeed a happy hunting ground. The Most Mysterious had poured his riches upon this country.

It was at the beginning of the moon of ripe plums that the people had camped here and there followed a long period of perfect autumn days. The interest and excitement of this inter-tribal life were unending. Feasts, dances, varied amusements were continuous. Deerskin drum, flute, Spanish tambourine, bull's-hide

rattle and clattering gourd furnished the musical accompaniments, and Kiowa, Sioux and Comanche vied with each other in splendour of dress, in grace of carriage and movement, and in marvels of physical prowess and endurance. Tales of the chase and of war and the mysteries of the wonder workers catered to the intellectual and æsthetic needs. 'Twas at its climax, the glorious life of the wilderness.

Nor were love and courtship lacking. Where an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is a necessary code a woman's honour is safe. By her own acts alone can it be tarnished. So it was that the maidens of these villages came and went and mingled together freely during the open day. Each one's shield of protection was her own reserve and her own head covering and this was as safe as the walls of a convent. Did she choose to listen to the voice of love she did so demurely, standing in the seclusion of some by-path, while her suitor, in equal seclusion, attuned his flute and chanted his love story. Not infrequently the seductive minstrelsy was pitched in foreign key and unknown tongue; yet love prevailed, marriage followed, and man or maiden was expatriated.

The daughter of the Dakota chief Yellow-Iron, because of her fresh youth and beauty, her grace of bearing and her taste in dress, was often the target of

admiring glances. In a less democratic community she might, had she chosen, have claimed preëminence among maidens, of whom enough were fine and comely.

Tokala's family clan was, perhaps, the most numerous and powerful band of relatives among the many gathered at this encampment. Yellow-Iron was quite the equal of Red Cloud as a leader and, in most affairs, was considered the safer counsellor. He had risen to prominence solely on the merits of his deeds and his character; for he was the youngest of a numerous family of brothers and sisters of whom eight, heads of families, were still living. These were High Hawk, sub-chief and the eldest, the partisan Pawnee Man, Whirlwind Soldier, the mystery priest Young Wolf, and three women known as Cloud Bird, Three Owls and Falling Leaf. All these had been the offspring of Running Wolf and three sisters whom he had taken successively to wife and who were long since dead.

These brothers and sisters of forty to seventy winters, together with their descendants and near connections, formed a powerful and closely knit band. It was a wealthy clan, one which fought for and protected its own. Feared, respected and admired, this alliance of long standing had bred men and women of strength of purpose and force of

character. The spirit of family pride and devotion had been fostered by two or three master minds among the children of Running Wolf and the fruit of this fostering was a rare attachment of each to each throughout the clan. This is not to say that strifes and animosities were never engendered among them —individual quarrels arose as among other allied families; but the wiser heads of the households, working in unison, had usually succeeded rarely well in bringing the offenders together in amity.

Such was the powerful clan of some two hundred members wherein the family of Yellow-Iron stood first in prestige and of which Tokala Noni was the very democratic princess.

Nevertheless the young maid at this gathering of the tribes was unapproachable to any gallant of them all. She came and went among the teepees oblivious of admiring glances. If her heart were sore in disappointment it did not appear; for she joined in the amusements of her fellows joyously, as became a modest girl of sixteen winters.

Her only male comrade and intimate was Keyahanhi, the lame son of High Hawk, who, by the Indian law, was accounted as her blood brother. This youth had been born with a crooked spine and his weak back prevented him taking part in the hunting or in any of the active sports.

His was the defect of mystery and he was regarded in some respects as a sacred person. He did not lack in useful accomplishments. He was a draughtsman and teepee decorator of the highest art of Indian attainment and was also keeper of the tribal records and a repository of its folk-lore. Also he was expert with bow and arrow and no one excelled him in throwing the knife. Keyahanhi had invented many original pictographs, which conveyed to the Dakota mind vivid impressions of things and forces in action. Thus the warriors and hunters of his clan were able to get their robes and teepees decorated in figures which represented their deeds and which delighted the barbaric taste. Keyahanhi was never so happy as when thus employed and he asked for nothing but the pleasure of the doing.

He was also a genial humourist and story teller, able to entertain old or young. In tribal folk-lore he had been patiently schooled by the men of mysteries; and as a joker he was original, having no equal among the Oglalas.

This lame youth stood high in the esteem of his clan and there were few who would not have done for him anything that he might have asked. On the long marches he rode upon a travois and often one or more of the trailers would ride alongside to exchange badinage or cheery words. The women

would toss into his vehicle ripe fruits or nuts which they had gathered, or the hunters would fetch him presents of grouse and rabbits.

Keyahanhi repaid their gifts, according to the nature or mood of the giver, with jokes and laughter, with complimentary remarks to the aged, with inquiries about personal welfare and recent doings. Now and then he furnished the cavalcade with matter for general chaffing and laughter, wherein figured the victim of a practical joke. On one occasion his uncle, Yellow Smoke, fat and jolly and something of a wag, rode by and dropped a bag containing a young fox into his travois.

"I know you are fond of ornaments, nephew," said old Yellow-Smoke. "You are very welcome to the tail of that fox." And he passed on.

Keyahanhi cried: "Thanks, uncle!" but, on uncovering the fox, discovered that his waggish relative had already appropriated its brush, leaving to him only the stripped vertebræ. As quick as thought the boy produced the tail of a grown fox, which had been given him the day before, and slipped it over the skinned member.

"Hée, uncle! Héee! Come back, come back!" he shouted.

Yellow Smoke pretended not to hear at first but finally wheeled and returned, his fat sides shaking

with laughter. As he came up Keyahanhi held out the fox with a beautiful brush pendant.

"See, uncle," he said very earnestly, "you thought to fool me with your joking but I had no sooner touched this fox than this fine, large tail grew upon it. Great are my mysterious powers! Now, uncle, you are a warrior and a man of deeds and this large, red tail will make a fitting ornament to your war-bonnet. Come then, let us exchange. The small one is indeed quite fine enough for me. Do take this big one, uncle, and give me yours."

Quite taken back at this return for his joke, and yet supposing the lad had another fox under his robe, Yellow Smoke hesitated. Then, seeing an apparent eagerness for the exchange, he assented.

"How, how," he said, drawing a fox's brush from the folds of his shirt.

The exchange was made, whole fox for fox's tail, but Keyahanhi's withdrawing fingers closed deftly upon the newly attached brush, and the coveted ornaments were both left in his hands.

Numbers of persons, attracted by the lad's shouts, had gathered about the two and the prairie now resounded with their yells of hilarity. Soon the tale of this trick spread the length of the caravan and Yellow Smoke became the butt of endless chaffing, which he bore with great good nature because he had been the victim of Keyahanhi.

VI

HOME LIFE

THE day was warm. A haze lay upon the valley and obscured the mountains. Small creatures of the grass and trees shrilled insistently and the high-keyed volume of their music sounded above a murmur of lazy life in the encampment. Now and then noisy crows flapped above the teepee poles or the war-cry of an eagle dropped out of the sky. Old men and dogs slept. Around the lodges sand lizards flitted, playing at hide and seek. The hunters had gone to the chase and children were gathered among the shallows of the sand-bars, between the villages, where their dripping brown skins glinted in the yellow sunlight. Knots of ponies, gathered under the trees, crowded together. Busy with tail and hoof they offered as little as possible of unexposed skins to the deer-flies.

At most of the lodges the folds of the teepees were tied back and the bottom skins rolled up so that women sat under them, gossiping or doing light housework, as under huge umbrellas.

Within such a bower of shade Keyahanhi and his

mother sat alone. The Sky, who was an Omaha woman almost as youthful in appearance as her son, was busy with readjusting and adding to the ornaments upon her husband's war-bonnet. To-morrow there would be a council of the tribal leaders and the state dress of the old chief needed repairs.

Keyahanhi also was occupied. Upon a new and beautifully tanned robe he was re-writing, in his own pictographs, the tribal records of his grandfather. By common consent of the family clan there had fallen to his keeping and interpretation Talking Bear's book of the Oglalas. Men of great age and authority admitted that Keyahanhi's rendering of these totemic writings accorded perfectly with the intent of the historian. However, some of these old ones disagreed as to the relative importance of certain events as compared with others which should have marked the years.

Yet the robe of Talking Bear was old and worn; many of its pictures were faded and blurred; and Keyahanhi had long been ambitious to reproduce the record after his own manner. Until of late there had been a dearth of proper skins; but now The Sky had tanned for him just the firm, short-haired bull's-hide that he needed. It had the smooth consistency necessary for his sort of dry tattooing. Upon the smoke-white surface of this robe he had drawn spiral

chalk lines, carefully measured, and between these lines figures of the new count were growing.

As he pricked in his stains and paints he wore an air of subdued excitement. His drawings were different from those of Talking Bear. He worked them out slowly and with painstaking care, often hesitating, often doubting, and in the end each one seemed to him to have become a living thing. The pictures of Talking Bear were made after the conventional pattern of the Dakota and were easily understood of all persons. Keyahanhi was in much doubt as to whether his woyakapi would be accepted in lieu of the original. This doubt became akin to exquisite agony when he had finished some particularly striking figure which departed from the canons of taste.

There was, in fact, no man of all his tribe so eager to gain distinction as this lad of the crooked back. The people marvelled at his labours! He had seen but seventeen winters; he was scarce able to walk without the aid of a stick; yet no one among the Oglalas could do so many things so well.

And he was the pride and glory of the fond mother who sat upon a mat opposite. He had been her only child, born to her when she had seen but fifteen snows. Notwithstanding the general belief that his crooked spine was the work of some mys-

terious and evil spirit, the Omaha mother was certain that a fall she had had upon the ice had caused it. True the evil ones might have set snares for her feet but she had been racing with a young friend and this she should not have done in her condition.

As often as she could spare them from her work, in these days of his great labour, her eyes rested lovingly upon her son. She shared in none of the doubt which crept into his moods. Had he expressed his fears to her she would have been very certain that in the end all must see that Keyahanhi's woyakapi was superior to that old, worn one of his grandfather. Neither of them had known this grandfather, who had been an uncle of High Hawk and of Yellow-Iron.

The Sky was always pleased when her son sat in the teepee thus intently engaged. She shared in his moods often and the soft light in her eyes, the glow as of twilight in her cheeks, reflected them. That he owed any inspiration to this deep quiet of sympathy Keyahanhi was wholly unaware. Yet he was never unaware of the presence of his mother. She could slip through the tiyopa never so softly that her going went unnoted and, quite unconsciously too, there followed an abatement of the intense interest which had pinned him to his work. He seldom talked with his mother. Whole days passed in the

teepee with no word between them save an occasional monosyllable.

* * * * * *

The boy had grown weary at length. He inclined his aching back against a bale of robes and turned his gaze outward. The haze had lifted in a breeze and shadows lay across the valley. Life was beginning to stir in the village. Women were returning from the coulées with bundles of fagots for the night festivities. The children had come out of the river and, with fresh zest for their land games, were romping among the teepees. A cross dog pelted by blunt-ended arrows ran howling away to the bushes.

Keyahanhi laughed. This dog had more than once snapped at his own heels. He would have shot the creature long since had it not belonged to the medicine-god-woman. He heard this old woman shrieking maledictions after the daring boys who were scuttling away to the river's bank. He laughed again and yet again presently when a bunch of ponies, set agoing by those same boys who were after them with grass ropes, stampeded through the village.

Old men yelled and women screamed and flourished their arms; but the horses, with heads lifted and fore-hoofs slapping, to clear the way of dogs, hurtled on amid curing racks, kettles and camp ef-

fects. A vicious pinto, tangled in a top-guy rope, wrecked a teepee pulling it down over a woman's head.

Keyahanhi forgot his weariness in merriment. He had no sympathy for the woman of the fallen teepee. People who were fearful enough to top-guy their lodges against the winds were always getting into difficulties.

When the dust of the scurry had settled Keyahanhi's eyes sought the western sky-lines. A number of long feather-clouds lay high athwart the blue. The lad counted seven of these white plumes stretching parallel to each other—war-bonnets of the cloud people! He had never seen any so large. What kind of folk indeed were those invisible ones who could wear feathers which spanned the mountains! Truly they were very great and mysterious.

The mountains also with peaks bonneted in snows and touching the clouds formed a world of mysteries. Keyahanhi had lived always on the plains; there were no such immense hills in his country. These fired his imagination, preparing him for marvels of belief. The eastern slopes of a great range now lay in shadow. But the atmosphere had clarified until timbered scarps, gaping cañons, tilted table-lands and promontories were outlined as in a mirror of the sky.

The lame youth saw not these things as physical features. To him the snow-capped peaks and bonneted crowns were the lodges of the Most Mysterious, their cavernous shadows and skyland woods the abode of unknown creatures of fateful augury in the affairs of men. As he continued to gaze his face became that of a dreamer. The ant-like business, the rustle and hum of village life, sank from sight and hearing. He was looking at the abode of thunder spirits and whirlwind people, the makers of clouds and forgers of the zigzag arrows of the sky, and of those who drive the winds forth to battle and hurl their stone missiles at the earth.

From this spell of the mountains and their mysteries he was presently awakened by the subtle essence of a human presence—a sympathetic presence. He turned his eyes to the tiyopa knowing, without having seen her, that Tokala stood in the doorway.

The girl had dressed for a maiden's feast and wore smoke-tanned fawn skins richly braided and embroidered with stained porcupine quills. Her hair was freshly oiled and fell, in two braids, across the shield and below the belt of her dress. Her eyes were shining and her face was aglow; for she had come bringing a gift.

In one hand she carried a turtle-shell bowl heaped

with yellow plums. "How, how, sister," greeted Keyahanhi, recalled from the skylands by her welcome coming. "I had thought that kanta did not grow in this country," he said, as she set the bowl between himself and his mother.

"So we were told," said Tokala, "nevertheless Ina and I found these after going far up a small creek." She took seat upon a bearskin and The Sky arose and let down the outer folds of the teepee. Keyahanhi helped himself to the plums. "Han han!" he said, "these are quite the finest kanta I have ever eaten. Do tell us about getting them, sister. Did you meet with any of the mysterious ones?"

"Yes, indeed," said Tokala, "we met some magpies who talked very mysteriously. We could make out nothing of what they meant."

"What were you doing, sister?" the lad asked eagerly.

"Why, we were just going among some bushes above where we had tied our ponies when these magpies came, one on either hand and one in front of us. Then two others appeared. We were surrounded!"

"And did they talk?"

"Every one. They seemed to be scolding us and, fearing a mischief, Ina counselled a retreat. So we started back to our ponies."

"Ho, I do not know what to think of those mag-

pies;" said Keyahanhi, "it appears that they were really angry."

"But, brother, perhaps they had seen Sinté-hda and thus wished to give us warning; for we had gone but a little way down the hill when we heard Rattle-tail making his whizzing sound."

"How, how," cried Keyahanhi, "those birds were telling you of Sinté-hda. You did well to retreat for, though you encountered but one, doubtless there were a great number of these snakes near by. Did you kill Rattle-tail, sister; did you drop a stone on his head and jump on it?"

"We were afraid and ran off to our ponies," replied Tokala.

"I also am frightened when Rattle-tail makes a whizzing noise," said The Sky. "Yet Sinté-hda is somehow a foolish fellow. He makes such a great fuss beforehand that he seldom can strike his enemies. But where, my daughter, did you find these sweet plums?"

"Oh, Ina," cried the girl, "that is the wonderful part of my story. You know the people have said plums do not grow so near the mountains. Well, we were hunting for nuts and acorns and rose-berries when we found a very wet place where the trees and bushes were so thickly interwoven that we had to step upon sinking bogs. These makacoco would

hardly bear our weight. Then while we were carefully picking our way, wetting the moccasins and leggings, the rain came. Who would have believed it? Just a little cloud no bigger than a teepee covering! P'hip-p'hip-p'hip-t'pi-pti-p't-p'tit, like that it rained; very softly the rain dropped. We stopped under some willow fringes and while we were hiding from the rain-drops some ducks fell out of the sky! Yes, truly, I think they came down with the rain; they tumbled into the water with such a splashing. We thought they must be cloud ducks because our hunters do not kill any like them. Well, these birds discovered us and away they went, making a great noise."

"Did they go back into the sky?" asked Keyahanhi, "if they did they belong to the thunder people."

"But we did not hear the thunder at all," objected Tokala.

"What colour were these ducks?"

"Dear, dear, I did not notice."

"You are a girl," said Keyahanhi resignedly.

"But the plums, my daughter?" inquired The Sky.

"Oh, yes, the plums, Ina, we found them at the end of the bogland after we had pushed through a fringe of willows. There was just a close little thicket of

thorn trees with nothing but plums on the ground. We were astonished. Some of the fruit was spoiled, but we gathered enough to fill one bag. We could not find any more."

While she was talking Keyahanhi spread his painted robe before her. "See, sister," he said, "I have to-day drawn 'Red Hawk Calls the Buffaloes in War-Dress.' That is the name of a winter which passed before my grandfather was born."

The figure to which he called attention was that of a chief in full dress, standing upon a curved line which represented a hill. One arm and hand were extended upon a level with the painted chin. The attitude was suggestive of beckoning and the mouth was open. At the feet was a smudge which the eye recognized as of sweet grass, and spiral lines, indicative of smoke and mystery, were drawn toward the sky.

Tokala bent above the robe and studied the picture admiringly.

"I think it is very perfect," she said. "Was it not strange that one should call the buffaloes wearing his bonnet and war-dress? Would they not be afraid to come near?"

"They were not afraid, it appears," said Keyahanhi. "See, here is my grandfather's picture. The many tracks show that a large number of buffaloes

came. Red Hawk must have had a powerful medicine. People cannot so call them any more."

"They do not need to call them here. I think that we should continue to live in this country," Tokala said with conviction.

The Sky looked at her soberly. "Do you not then," she asked, "wish to return to the Smoky River?"

Tokala turned her eyes to the open tiyopa and considered the matter gravely. "No," she replied finally, "I do not."

VII

AN INDIAN WOOING

THE moon of goose-flight had arrived and long lines of teepees, smoky and weather-beaten, yet stood upon the banks of the Yellow River. The buffaloes were gone but the lodges were stored with dried and pounded meats and now the hunters took toll of the runs of fish and flights of geese and ducks.

There had passed seven moons of peace and plenty and of deaths and accidents there had been so few that it was known the Wakan Tanka had especially favoured the allies. The death of High Hawk, killed at a buffalo surround in the moon of first snows, had been the chief casualty among the Oglalas. His relatives had sincerely mourned the old chief's loss for a time. With the passing of the snows talk and tales of him were numbered among the things of tradition.

The Buffalo Woman and Tokala were often visitors at the lodge of The Sky and Keyahanhi. And to these relatives the Omaha mother had confided a secret plan of herself and her son, which had to do with a certain doctor and man of mystery at the

Comanche village. They had reason to hope that this wonder-worker, who had added to a knowledge of the medicines and mysteries of his own people those also of the Spanish-Mexican, would be able to make Keyahanhi whole and strong.

Never had The Sky and her son so much desired this consummation. They had as yet provision and property for their needs; but they knew that the time must soon come when they would be dependent, for many necessaries, upon the gifts of their friends. Yet the employment of a foreign doctor was a matter requiring discretion. There were jealous mystery workers among the Oglalas whose enmity they wished to avoid. So only the wife of Yellow-Iron and her daughter were taken into their confidence, and Keyahanhi's visits to the Comanche were of apparently no purpose save for amusement.

One afternoon the Buffalo Woman, returning to her teepee after a long talk with The Sky about this matter, found her husband alone and dressed for some important occasion. She looked at him with furtive admiration; for he was a handsome man when becomingly arrayed. He had a high look upon his face, though he seemed to be intent upon clearing his pipe, at the bowl of which he was scraping with a small bone instrument.

Supposing that there was to be a council of their

head men at the Soldiers' Tepee the wife held her peace and resumed her household duties. She was soon engaged in pounding dried roots but turned her eyes now and then to glance at her chief with approval. He was indeed resplendent in paints, newly beaded buckskins and training head-dress. The pipe-bone breastplate which covered his broad chest had been cleaned and polished. His hair, freshly oiled and braided, was strung with beautiful ornaments and his war-bonnet, of her own and Tokala's fashioning, that was indeed something to be proud of! Visor and trail piece were trimmed in porcupine quills in green, red and yellow; the hangings were of ermine skins and traders' ribbons; and crown and trail piece carried one hundred plumes of the white, tail feathers of the bald eagle, tipped in black and tasselled in scarlet down. This bonnet was quite the finest head-dress to be found among the Oglalas. It had been remodeled since the chief had worn it. His buck-skins also were new. The wife herself had tanned the skins and all throughout the late season of snows Tokala had laboured putting on the rich beadwork. The wife could ill conceal her pride and satisfaction.

Presently the chief seated himself opposite her, filled his pipe and smoked for a time. He had said nothing and now, of a sudden as he looked at her,

the wife became aware that his silence was weighted with matter of import and that he wished to speak with her. This he did in due season.

"Mitawin," he said, "my brother's family are bereft now these many moons. Lo, there is no one to furnish meat for the teepee. I hear that my sister-in-law and her son must soon subsist upon charity."

During the slow delivery of these sentences the Buffalo Woman's face had taken on an imperturbable mask. She maintained a discreet silence and continued with her work.

Seeing at length that she seemed not to have listened the chief repeated his words. A man does not often seek thus to impress his wife.

After some deliberation the Buffalo Woman made reply, still keeping at her work. With phrases wrought, as it were, into the twist of her stone pestle, she said, "Keyahanhi is gone secretly to the village of the Comanches where there is a wakan man who knows all mysteries. It is said that this man can make my nephew strong and able to hunt for the teepee. My sister-in-law believes it."

"I have heard of this," said Yellow-Iron at length. "Women do not well to attempt to keep these matters secret. It seems that the Most Mysterious made my brother's son as he is. He was born thus.

Are we like to see a man able to undo the work of Wakan Tanka? It is foolishness."

Of a large build, and phlegmatic, wholly unlike her magnetic and active husband, the Buffalo Woman yet understood his moods and often read his thoughts ahead of specific utterance. Perhaps this was because she was some years older than he and had been a wife before she married him. She now gazed at Yellow-Iron with the steady eye of benevolence and for the first time in their married years he sat before her somewhat abashed. He did not lift his eyes from the bowl of his pipe. After a proper time the wife spoke soberly.

"Is it not quite to be expected," she asked, "that my sister-in-law will wish to return to her own people? She is yet a young woman and may marry among the Omahas where she has many kinfolk. She had thirteen winters when she was taken and women do not easily forget their kinsmen."

The chief continued to study the bowl of his pipe, but he spoke again presently.

"My sister-in-law is a Dakota," he said. "She has lived too long among us to wish for change. Her son is a Dakota."

The Buffalo Woman's face took on a serious cast of reflection. Her brows were knitted by thoughts. "Perhaps," she ventured at length, "perhaps, it is

possible, my sister-in-law would wish to live with us. Lo, my husband is a great hunter and, when there is meat to be had, our teepee is well provided."

"How, how!" Yellow-Iron lifted his eyes to his wife's face, looking at her with approval. "My arm is strong," he said, "and we have more than enough. Shall we speak to your sister-in-law about this?"

The Buffalo Woman sat in quiet for a time. She was thinking deeply about this matter. When a Dakota takes a second wife it is usually the sister or niece of his first and being of close kin the new relation is often a welcome one. The Sky was an Omaha, but she had always been the favourite sister-in-law, and the Buffalo Woman had no marriageable sister of the blood kin. Yellow-Iron was younger than herself by several winters and she reflected that, in course of time being a man of property, he would naturally wish to take a younger wife. He was of a just nature and would provide equally for all the members of his household. She would choose then, she considered finally, that he should take this good and amiable Omaha woman.

She arose and put a gray blanket about her head and shoulders. "Come," she said, "let us talk with The Sky, before Keyahanhi returns."

* * * * * *

The Sky sat alone in her teepee. She was very

busy. From her store of dried berries and roots and from the small stock of dried beef at hand she was making wakapanpi, or pemmican. This was most nourishing food and was made in the interest of economy. The long march to the north would begin in the moon of good grass and all her hoard of provision would be needed. She had laid aside mourning for her husband and was taking thought for the future.

While she worked hope was busy with this future. Coyotero, chief medicine man of the Comanches, had declared to Keyahanhi that he could make him whole and strong as other men. This powerful wakan man had promised to conjure the evil spirit which had its grip upon the spine of her son. Two ponies had been agreed upon as the price of a cure; but these were not to be delivered to the wakan man until he had truly worked this wonder. Thus, as The Sky worked, she was thinking of her dear boy and offering prayers to the Most Mysterious that he might be made strong and able as other men.

Suddenly the folds of her tiyopa were parted and the Buffalo Woman came in. She was followed by Yellow-Iron, who stooped low to make room for his high plumes. The two said, "How, how," taking seats, as was the custom, without ceremony.

The Sky returned their greeting and put aside her

work. She was not a little surprised that the chief should call upon her in such distinguished dress. Instantly she was troubled, for she thought, "Now truly my brother-in-law is angry because of my son going to the Comanche doctor. He has come to reprove me."

So certain was she of this that her face flushed with emotion and the wells of her eyes filled. Hoping to appease her grave relative she placed bits of her choice wakapanpi before him begging him to taste of her meat. "I am glad, brother-in-law," she said, "that you and your wife have come, for I was feeling lonely without my son." Thus the way was at once made plain for his speaking and her thoughts were busy with what she should say in defense.

The visitors helped themselves to her meat and pronounced it wasteste—very good—and Yellow-Iron spoke so cordially that her heart leaped joyfully. Surely he had not come to speak harsh words. When he had finished eating the chief arose gravely and took his seat upon a mat which had once been reserved for the master of the lodge.

Something in his manner filled The Sky with a new emotion. Her eyes were drawn to the Buffalo Woman's face, and what she saw there dyed her cheeks in deep, dark reds. Within the sister-in-law's slow moving nature there lurked upon occasion

something of mischievous good humour. Although her countenance at this time showed grave enough, mischief was gathering in the corners of her eyes and The Sky's head drooped to conceal her confusion.

Her intuition had grasped the meaning of this visit. Yellow-Iron in splendid array had come as a wooer. The Sky's hands nervously sought some work from the parflêche bag at her side; but, when she tried to thread some beads, her fingers refused the office.

The woman had much reason for embarrassment; for what was apparently about to happen would have been welcome enough years ago. As a captive she had been the prize of High Hawk and, being but a young girl, had been adopted by his sister. And when she had become reconciled in a measure to the new life the young man, Yellow-Iron, had begun to look upon her with favour, and secretly she had felt drawn toward the handsome warrior. Then High Hawk's wife had been drowned and she had been speedily installed in his lodge with none to gainsay his powerful wish. She had been a faithful wife and mother; but her young romance, though clipped in the budding, had not been forgotten.

Her visitors did not long keep her in suspense. Presently the Buffalo Woman spoke and kindly.

"Sister-in-law," she said, "you have said that you

are lonesome and our hearts have pitied you. We wish now that you should dwell with us. Lo, my husband is greatest among Oglala hunters and who is so able as he to protect his family, who so swift and cunning to take horses of the enemy? He wishes to make you his wife."

"Wan," said Yellow-Iron, "what she has said is true. My heart is soft toward the flower of the Omahas."

At these words The Sky's face became composed, the colours faded from her cheeks and she gathered her pride in hand.

"I do not wish to dwell in another's teepee but always in my own," she said, speaking softly that she might not give offense.

The pair saw how it was with her. "Han, Han," said Yellow-Iron, "am I not able to support two lodges? It is well."

But The Sky was not ready to yield yet. "My friends have forgotten," she answered, "that it is not the custom among my people for the bereft to marry soon. After five more moons there will be time enough to talk about this."

"How, how," said Yellow-Iron, "in five moons we shall speak further of the matter," and he arose and went out.

VIII

HOW HOSTILES WERE MADE

THE Comanches had gone to their own Staked Plains, the Kiowas had gathered their horse herds for a move and, at the Sioux village, the travoix were packing. It was early morning and in the west black clouds were gathered, capping the mountain tops. The wings of thunder birds were heard afar beating the air with strokes which shook the earth under the feet. Far out upon the plain red arrows of the angry ones were zigzagging spitefully.

People huddled into the teepees, here and there standing, that all might have shelter from the coming storm. While they were thus waiting, the timid ones muttering prayers for safety, a hue and cry arose upon the outposts. Riders came clattering in with the warning shouts:

"The enemy, the enemy!" "Fly—fly for your lives!" "A great army of the Long Knives!"

Tokala and her mother were alone when these words were caught out of the clamour. They ran out of their half-stripped lodge to find people rushing

for their ponies—warriors springing to arms—confusion reigning as in a whirlwind. High above the uproar they heard the voices of the chiefs, Red Cloud and Yellow-Iron, "Flee, ye women! To the mountains—to the mountains!" And to their warriors, "Be strong—be strong, ye men, to go against the enemy!" So these war-chiefs raged and each woman and child knew that safety was of individual seeking. Save himself who can! For men must fight and women fly.

Tokala and the Buffalo Woman sped for their ponies which were picketed a little way up the creek. In every direction save to the east people were running. In flurries of desperation they were leaping upon ponies or hitching travoix. Women with babes in arms, boys and girls of tender age, dragged at travois poles and packs. The aged and helpless tossed their arms and shrieked.

Tokala, as she ran, saw the same wild scene enacted at the Kiowa village, the scurry of the frightened, where a kind of order reigned amid chaos. Teepees vanished, knocked together in a bundle, lines and squads of armed horsemen formed as by magic. So there would be time to flee with the lodge skins and packs. The girl and her mother became swiftly, furiously methodic. With quick knife strokes they cut the picket ropes of their ponies, leaped upon the

backs of two, and lashed the little herd toward their lodge.

A scout went by them riding as the antelope runs. "Fly—fly—fly!" he shouted. They swept the eastern hills with scared glances but saw no enemies, only their own warriors scurrying together on the flats. At their lodge they hurled themselves to the ground. There was no time to tie horses; these were gathered, heads together, and left to stand with hanging ropes. Then the two fell upon their teepee and in a twinkling the lodge was struck, the skins rolled and tied. They were loading a travois when their ears were stunned by a near explosion, and a cloud of dirt and dust was thrown over and upon them. When they had recovered from the shock and saw clear again their horses were stampeded and the rattle of firearms was heard on every hand. A great gun boomed again and its missile shrieked above their heads and burst upon the water.

They were stricken helpless and saw other women in like case running for the willow thickets. The enemy had charged out from all the coulées and ravines to east and north. Persons who had been fortunate enough to gain a mount were flying up river or jumping their horses over its bank.

"Fall down—fall down!" shouted the Buffalo Woman to her daughter, "pretend to be dead!"

Tokala was standing, still dazed from the effect of the bursting shell, when these words were screamed into her ear and accompanied by a push which flung her upon her face.

The rattle of guns, the clatter of hoofs and shouts of war, continued and came roaring in upon them until they were enveloped in a mêlée of fighting men. It was impossible to lie under the trampling hoofs of horses, looming as large as buffaloes.

Both women sprang to their feet and ran, the mother foremost and neither recking whither.

A man charged toward them, a man upon a white horse, swinging a long knife. Seeing escape impossible, the Buffalo Woman halted and tore open her dress at the bosom to show that she was a woman. Tokala saw the soldier plunge his long blade into her mother's breast and then the girl fell upon the earth and buried her face in the dust.

Expecting the death stroke, she cried to the Most Mysterious, "Have pity—have pity—make me strong—make me strong!"

The thunder of hoofs and rattle of shots went by as a rush of the wind and the girl, astonished, found herself lying alone and unharmed. For a time she lay, scarcely breathing, while the tumult of fighting sounded farther and farther away. Her people were retreating across and up the river. Then quite sud-

denly the firing ceased and she lifted her head cautiously to peer in the direction they had gone.

At first her blurred vision could take in nothing but the havoc and destruction which had been wrought. She saw only the bodies of the dead, the struggling, wounded horses, the burning teepees and scattered packs. The impulse to go to her dead mother and fall upon the body with wailing would have quickly roused her but suddenly men, Indians of a strange tribe, appeared at the river's bank. They had come to plunder and scalp the dead. She knew by their appearance, the shining brass of the belts they wore, that they were scouts of the white soldiers.

The instinct of self-preservation survived. Lying flat, with face to the earth and taking advantage of a bit of uneven surface, the girl crawled forward, moving as the snail moves, until a thicket of willow fringe offered shelter. Within the copse she rose carefully to her feet and, stepping upon sticks and stones, made her way softly to the water's edge.

The small creek which ran through the Sioux village had a shallow, rippling current. Into this she stepped and waded up stream with as much haste as was prudent until there were no longer willows to offer shelter. Again she took refuge in a copse. She had small hope of escape, yet she could not en-

dure to hide without watching the enemy. She stole forward, parting the willow twigs with infinite caution, until from the cover of a cluster of small bush she could look out upon the battle-field.

A half-dozen strange riders were going slowly over the ground. They appeared to be searching for some one or something among the wrecked teepees. Presently one halted where the teepee poles of Yellow-Iron's lodge were still standing. This one leaped from his horse and examined the ground, apparently looking for tracks. He seemed to follow these toward the creek and stood looking down upon a body, which Tokala was certain was that of her mother. There was something familiar in this scout's appearance. He turned slowly, showing his face in distant profile, and she knew him for Koska of the Brulés.

Instantly a new terror possessed her. This man was a traitor, who had struck at his own people. He had brought the white soldiers to wreak destruction among Dakotas! Death, any fate, was better than to fall into his hands and instinct clamoured that he was searching for her and no other.

It was at this moment that the storm which had been threatening burst upon the valley. Rain fell in torrents and, driven by a high wind, beat upon the ground until a mist arose which blurred all objects in

the distance. This was good for hiding the trail. Tokala retreated from the willows to the creek channel. A low bank and the falling rain were her shield. Stooping until her face almost touched the current she waded up-stream, making what speed she could. Her eyes scanned each turn of the banks. On her left the hills were seamed with deep runs and ravines. Some of these waterways cut through the valley to the channel of the creek.

The instinct of the wild was Tokala's and with that guide she chose her line of flight along the bottom of a shallow, grass-grown ravine. As she ran the roar of the storm was deafening. Thunder, wind and rain, battled with the earth, but her fear of capture was greater than her fear of the fire-arrows and the awful voices of the angry gods. She reached the hills and ran, as the fox runs, keeping always the rise of the ground between herself and the line of the enemy's sight. She circled and doubled among the foot-hills until at last the heights were passed and then she sped, as straight as might be, to the west. After a time, and much exhausted with beating against the winds, she found shelter in a rough country where there was thick chaparral of sage-bush upon the hills.

Upon a flat promontory, which overlooked the slant scarps and commanded a view of three narrow

valleys, and in a dense thicket of tall sage, she found such cover as the coyote seeks. With the rain yet beating, the wind roaring, and voices of thunder birds still muttering, she did not fear to cry aloud, bewailing her fate. She sat upon the watered earth and mourned as those mourn who are without hope. Having no blanket, she untied her braids and let fall their tresses covering her face and body. She put earth upon her head.

"Ina, my mother—Até, my father—they are dead. O Wakan Tanka, pity me, pity me!" she wailed in despairing cadences. "O Maka, Mother Earth!—be merciful—take me to your bosom. Lo, I am bereft—there is none left—I die because of this. O Mother Earth—be very pitiful—let me not suffer."

Thus she cried piteously until the rain ceased, the winds died, and the mutter of thunders fell away to a far-off echo as of drum beats. When the air was still and the sun shone, caution returned. Believing that her kindred had perished Tokala had no wish to live; she feared only to be taken alive by the enemy. So she sat until the sun was high, shapeless and immovable, enveloped in woe. There came to her ears only the twitter of bush birds, the rustle of tiny four-foots, and the harsh, ominous croak of evil creatures winging their way whither the dead awaited.

The sun was slanting westward when the stricken one aroused. Something, her wilderness instinct, spoke to her telling her that all were not lost. Truly some one, not the enemy, was at hand. She uncovered her head and listened intently, but heard only the drumming of her heart. Finally she crept to the edge of the bush and peered out upon the flat lands. At that point she saw no living creature save an antelope grazing on the hill slope. Yet so certain was she of human nearness that she made her way, through the covert, to the opposite brow of the promontory. Her eyes were quickly rewarded. Upon a flat below, at a distance of two or three bowshots, a man and horse were moving. The man was following his animal, evidently wishing to catch the pony which had a travois attached. They were coming toward her and the man moved haltingly as though lamed from a wound. While she was looking and wondering the horse turned aside, bringing into full view the limping figure behind. It was her brother Keyahanhi.

Tokala felt no surprise. It appeared that she had known from the first that it was Keyahanhi of whose coming she had been apprised. A calm peace pervaded her soul. It was the Taku Wakan, God of the Four Winds, who had sent a message to her understanding. Who else but this powerful one could

have preserved the lame brother? Surely no one. She questioned not in doubt but prayerfully, putting her trust in the manifest worker of mysteries.

In the calm mood of this faith she made her way down the hill. Keyahanhi, intent upon catching his pony, which contrarily moved just fast enough to keep beyond his reach, did not see her until she had come quite near. Then, being well-nigh exhausted, he fell to the earth where he reclined upon an elbow and looked at her with far-away eyes.

"My brother," she said, "where are our people? Tell me who escaped."

He still gazed at her dully. "I am very tired," he said, "chasing this horse. I wish you would catch him for me. I do not know if any have escaped."

Mechanically the girl set about catching his pony. The contrary beast kept away for a time but, in one of its turns, she ran swiftly and leaped upon the travois and instantly the animal became docile, halting at command. She drove back to Keyahanhi, dismounted, secured the lariat and tied it to a bush.

She seated herself by her brother. "Tell me," she said, "how you got away from those wicked soldiers. I think the Very Mysterious One has surely aided you."

Keyahanhi answered speaking in dull, indifferent monotone. "When we heard of the enemy," he

said, "I seized my bow and quiver. I wished to fight, defending the teepee. My mother ran and hitched a travois. She is very strong. She seized me and put me in the travois. Then Ina struck my horse fiercely with the quirt, driving him across a creek ford. It was then that the bullets of the big gun burst and my horse ran away. He ran up the creek and toward the hills. The soldiers were charging across the valley. One saw me and came in pursuit. My horse ran very swiftly but the soldier came nearer, shooting at me with a short gun. He did not hit me but came close and I turned about in the travois and sent an arrow into his horse, which fell and threw him headlong. Then I pricked my pony with the tooth of an arrow and he ran a long way in these hills. At last, when I was looking back, the horse jumped a deep ditch and I was thrown from the travois. I crawled out of the water and lay for a time on the bank of this ditch, wishing that the enemy would come and make a finish of me.

"The Big Knives did not come and so I got up and followed my horse, using my bow to assist me in walking. I found the pony in this valley and was trying to catch him as you have seen."

When he had finished talking Keyahanhi rested. He lay upon his back looking into the sky. Tokala said nothing. She again veiled her face and

shoulders in her hair and sat with her chin upon her bosom.

* * * * * *

When grief and despair have done their utmost hunger and thirst yet remain to healthy natures. The sun was approaching near the earth when Keyahanhi aroused from sleep. "Sister," he said, "I am very hungry; let us find some roots."

Tokala arose. Her cheeks were tear-furrowed and hollow and her eyes sunken. She looked old and worn. Her dress of trader's cloth, which she had put on that morning because of the rain, was bedraggled with drying mud. The crown of her head was encircled with baked clay. She had heard Keyahanhi as one listens to voices in a dream. He got to his feet, untied his pony and repeated his request in a querulous voice.

"Come," he said, "let us go from here. There is nothing at this place."

He got into his travois, Tokala mounted the horse, and they set out, going up a valley to the northwest. They travelled until sunset, stopping only to drink at the roily waters of a run. They had now, while it was still light, come upon a grassy plain lying at the foot of some hills. Here the green tops of edible roots attracted their attention. They halted and dug a quantity of bulbs and tubers of which they ate

freely. Here they camped for the night in a thicket of young timber. The travois had been packed with several robes and a number of household utensils and they were able to make comfortable couches for their rest.

In the morning each felt some renewal of life and hope.

"Ho, sister," said Keyahanhi, "we must now travel steadily in that direction," pointing to the north-northeast. "Han, han," she said, "that is right, brother." The instinct of the migrating bird was that of these children of the wilderness. On the Smoky River there was yet a large town of Oglalas, the village of Spotted Tail; and there, if they could succeed in reaching it, they knew that they should finally meet any survivors of their own people.

All that day they travelled in listless silence, stopping only to dig roots or to allow Keyahanhi to shoot at the sage grouse which scuttled from cover in their front.

"Brother, you are indeed a hunter," Tokala said when she had picked up one of these birds with the head quite severed below its feathered ears. "Ho, that is nothing," answered Keyahanhi, stowing the bird in his travois, but the sister saw that he was pleased with her compliment. At night they again camped among the rough lands.

On the third morning they were travelling among some sand-hills where were many outcroppings of gray rock. They were near the crest of a rise, when Tokala discovered a number of horsemen galloping toward them. Something in the movement betrayed them as strangers.

"Toka! The enemy—we are lost!" cried the girl. Keyahanhi turned in the travois and saw a score or more of horsemen approaching.

"Pawnees!" he cried, "dogs who acted as scouts for the white soldiers." He cast a swift glance at the surrounding hills. "Sister," he said, "see yonder point of rocks! Urge the horse! Fly—fly! let us get to that cover. When the coyotes reach us I will shoot some of them."

The words were not out of his mouth before Tokala was lashing their pony toward the stony ridge. While she plied the quirt, Keyahanhi pricked the horse on with the point of an arrow. They had been travelling slowly and their animal was fresh and swift. For a moment it seemed that they might run away from their pursuers, but soon the double load began to tell upon their pony—and they were no more than five bow-shots in advance of the horsemen when they reached the cover of a crown of rocks. A heap of loose sandstone lay along the crest of a ridge, commanding its heights.

Here was fighting cover. Their pony was hastily made fast to a pine stump; and Tokala, working with swift certitude, piled loose stones in front of a niche in a low ledge. Almost incredibly soon she had made a stronghold which no man would care to approach so long as Keyahanhi had arrows in his quiver. Here they might hope to hold out for a time unless the enemy should rush upon them in a body.

It soon appeared, however, that the strange warriors had no such design. These halted at a height of the hill and at a respectful distance. Keyahanhi counted them on his fingers.

There were twenty-six men.

"Sister," said the lad, "they are all tried warriors. They are strangers, and I think they wish to take us alive."

Tokala said nothing. Her face was set, strong and resolute with some hard, inner purpose. When a warrior separated from the dismounted group and came toward them, holding up a hand, she knew whom it was. She knew also that Keyahanhi must soon recognize the man, although he bore himself proudly as a chief.

"Brother," she said, "do not shoot at this one whatever happens. It is indeed Koska, the Brulé."

Keyahanhi gave vent to a fierce exclamation, then,

seeing his sister's eyes turned upon him sombrely, suddenly checked his wrathful words. "He is of the enemy?" he said enquiringly. Tokala made a gesture of assent.

The man had now come near. With a movement like that of a lame lion Keyahanhi lurched over the barricade. He arose to his feet. His bow twanged and its arrow sped. Incredibly swift were his arm movements. Three arrows sang with the spiteful hiss of feathered furies before Tokala could leap from cover and catch his wrist.

Her interference, however, was needless. The Brulé had stepped aside three times, and the very accuracy of their aim enabled him to dodge the shafts with ease. He made no hostile move but held his arms aloft, with palms down, making the extreme sign of amity. This pacific action, rather than Tokala's interference, saved Keyahanhi from a further breach of the rules of war. He sank back upon the rocks. "Trust him not, sister," he muttered wrathfully, "he is a dog—traitor—poisonous snake!"

Tokala stood, as became a chief's daughter, looking at her former suitor in proud scorn. The man made no move to come nearer but raised his voice in conciliatory tones.

"I wish to speak with the daughter of Yellow-Iron," he said. "I am not come to do a mischief. See,

yonder are my soldiers, and I stand here with no weapon in hand."

The two saw that it was indeed as he said; he was unarmed. Keyahanhi, crippled as he was, flushed hotly to note that he had assailed a man in such case. Nevertheless his anger flamed out again.

"Go away, dog of a Brulé—spy of the enemy—carrion eater! We want nothing to do with you!" he cried shrilly.

"Not so, brother, not so," urged Tokala. "This man knows if any of our people are living. I will go forth to talk with him. If he attempt treachery ——"

"I will shoot the skunk," growled Keyahanhi.

Tokala again turned sombre eyes upon his face. "Aim not your arrow at him," she said; "slay me."

"I will do even that if it be necessary," said the brother. "Go out to him then, but not too near."

Tokala turned from him and walked toward the Brulé slowly, as one who goes to parley with an enemy. At a little distance in his front she took a seat upon a boulder, gazing at him with level eyes. "I wish to learn of my people," she said, "nothing else."

The Brulé stood for a moment, looking at her earnestly, weighing his words. Tokala met the gaze with a face unyielding in flinty hostility. Though he wore no feathered bonnet, bore no arms, she saw

that this man had become a chief. His buckskin shirt was fringed with scalp-locks, and in his bearing there spoke the warrior of deeds, victor in many battles. Had she not looked upon him as a traitor her heart, after the manner of her kind, must have held him in honour.

He remained standing erect, and presently he spoke. "Daughter of a chief, some of your people are killed," he said, "but many are alive. Your father is living and the mother of Keyahanhi. The Long Knives have taken them captive; but they will be spared and sent home safely. This has been pledged. I was not at fault in this matter." He spoke with great earnestness. "I would have saved your people from attack if I had known in time."

"I did not come before you to hear about your doings;" said Tokala sternly, "I wish only to know who of my kin are living."

He made a strong gesture of appeal. "Many of them are living," he said. "I do not know of all. Red Cloud's village suffered greatest loss. When they told me you were not among the captives, I hastened to search for you. Daughter of a chief, your trail was well hidden. I and my scouts made many circles and only last night discovered the travois tracks.

"My men are Absaroke and I am of them, their

chief. Your people made me thus. Listen, hear me in my defense, of which I will speak to no one but you."

He paused. There was that in his solemn and earnest manner which seemed to compel attention. Tokala considered gravely for a time, and then she said, "Speak."

"Wasté! Daughter of a chief, last year the Absaroke took me captive after I had fought and overcome a number of men. These Kangi treated me with great generosity. After I had slain two of their men they invited me to join them against their enemies. I did so and we fought the Blackfeet with success, taking scalps and many horses. This was good; but when the snows began to melt my heart was sick for my people. I wished to go homeward.

"I spoke to the chiefs about this and they said, 'Go, we will not detain you against your will.' They gave me a fine horse and a war-dress. 'Tell the Sioux of your deeds,' they said, 'and of how the Kangi have treated you. Those people ought now to make peace with us.' So my heart was glad. I went homeward singing.

"What happened? Listen. When I had told the truth among the Brulés these treated me with scorn. They said, 'Lo, see what a great liar this fellow has become! Where are the Oglalas whom he was

chasing around? Doubtless one of their strong men has taken a war-bonnet and scalps of the Kangi and this fine dandy has stolen the property. Fie on him!' These things they said, abusing me until my father and kin-folk no longer believed what I had told.

"I went away from those people. I said, 'I am an Absaroka.' I kept repeating to myself 'I am an Absaroka.' I prayed to my Tunkan, and it was so, and I returned to my people and led a war-party against the Cheyennes. We rode very quickly far to southward.

"These are my soldiers." He swept a hand toward the distant group. "They are tried men who know the trails and where to seek the enemy. Yet we fell into an evil snare. A war-party of Comanches had killed some white persons on their Yellow River road. We found the trail of these Comanches and camped to consider whether, being a small party, we should follow them to their village. We did not know, at that time, that these men had attacked a wagon train. Thus a great company of Long Knife soldiers came upon us suddenly. We were surrounded. Seeing that we were lost we made the peace sign. Thus these Long Knives of the Big Father discovered that we were not the ones who had destroyed some wagon-soldiers. They were on good terms with the Crows and they wished my men

to go with them, acting as scouts. I was unwilling but my men were eager to go—I could not restrain them."

He stooped to the earth and, filling his hands with dust, poured it upon his head.

"Thus," he continued, "your people and the Kiowas, who were innocent, were attacked. The Comanches had escaped and the White Soldiers did not know. Had I been acting as scout this could not have happened. But I wished to do nothing. I was riding among the hindmost when the attack began. When I discovered that we were fighting the Oglalas I rushed to the White Chief and told him.

"Listen, daughter of a chief, you may tell that lame youth, who is so fierce with his arrows, that I saved the Omaha Woman from death. The Long Knife who would have stabbed her had my arrow through his chest, though none saw the act."

He had been walking back and forth with chiefly bearing as he talked. He now suddenly unbent and dropped upon the ground, sitting at ease.

Tokala's face had softened as the narrative proceeded. She knew that this man spoke the truth. She did not need to recall that a war-party of the Comanches had gone north to strike at the Pawnees and that these had returned the night before their village teepees had been struck. She saw the ex-

patriated one as he was, the proud and upright warrior whom an evil fate had separated from his people. Understanding how he must have suffered, as he sat humbly before her, her eyes were lifted and rested upon his face and the light in them was as the warm glow of a summer morning. He responded to this after the manner of the natural man.

He stretched his hands toward her in a quick gesture of appeal. "Heart's Desire," he said, "I am no longer a Dakota. Koska the Brulé is dead and there lives one born of full stature and with war-weapons in his hands. That one is Cloud Chief of the Absaroke.

"Heart's Desire, among the Oglalas your couch is soft; you are clothed in swan's-down and fawn-skins and wear beautiful ornaments. The daughter of Yellow-Iron is beloved. The hearts of the dwellers laugh when her voice is heard in the teepee.

"Heart's Desire, listen yet a little longer. The Absaroke live among the mountains where no enemies can come near them. These people are wealthy, owning a great country and many ponies and fine lodges. Among them the wives and maidens are treated well. The teepee of Cloud Chief is empty. No woman has lifted the tiyopa nor stepped within. The Absaroke are waiting to welcome the fairest among Oglala maidens."

He ceased speaking, for Tokala's face had grown cold and the light had gone out of her eyes. She arose and drew herself to her full height.

"I am a Dakota," she said coldly, "I am a Dakota," and she turned her back upon him and went to Keyahanhi.

The brother had watched the two with weapons in hand. His ear had caught something of the Brulé's talk. "What has this wolf of the Crows been saying, sister?" he asked sullenly.

"Call him not wolf," answered Tokala with anger. "He is not of our enemies and he has suffered enough at the hands of Dakotas."

One of the tenets of Keyahanhi's faith was perfect trust in Tokala, in her high and serious moods. He marvelled but accepted her dictum; for she had spoken with a flash of the eye and with unwonted vehemence.

"Hun-hun-he!" he exclaimed, "there be many mysteries in the world."

"Now you speak with truth," said Tokala.

At this moment they heard a voice calling to them and turned to see their late visitor standing at some distance. He held three arrows above his head for a moment, then stooped and thrust their points into the ground; and so leaving them, standing in a row, he wheeled and walked away to his men.

IX

CLOUD CHIEF ON GUARD

ON every hand, clean to the blue line of the horizon, stretched the green velvet blanket of the Moon of New Grass; and often Tokala's pony trod upon dainty flowers which had delighted her eyes.

She rode happily on this day. Her heart was singing. She and Keyahanhi had reached safely the borders of their own green prairies. Although they were yet far from the Smoky River it seemed like getting home, this coming off the dusty, yellow-grass lands into the north country. The river of disaster had been left many suns behind and Tokala's thoughts turned to the new life to be taken up at the home village.

She had mourned truly for the Buffalo Woman; but news that her father and other relatives were living and unhurt had taken the edge off her grief. She had loved her mother well; yet the Buffalo Woman had never understood her. Tokala had gone to The Sky with all such confidences as her heart had prompted. The Omaha Woman she had loved even more than she had loved her brother

Keyahanhi. And now she, Tokala, knew what would happen. Her father would take The Sky into his lodge and Keyahanhi's mother would be her own mother indeed. Ah, they would yet be happy.

There might have been another reason, although a subconscious one, for the buoyant feeling which this day filled her cheeks and eyes with a sparkle not born of the soft breezes and the joy of a day in May.

During several suns, after their parting with the Brulé, once each day, upon the rim of some far hill, to the right or left of their advance, a number of horsemen had appeared—always the same number—arranged in a row clearly outlined against the sky; and always they had remained in that position until the passing of the travois laden pony.

Then in a rough country these guardian horsemen had disappeared and the Dakotas had seen no more of them.

Tokala had said nothing nor seemed to notice this daily attendance and Keyahanhi, knowing the way of lovers among his people, had also held his peace.

When, after several days among the hill lands, they had travelled without seeing the Brulé's war-party Keyahanhi supposed that the Crows must have grown weary of following after the fancy of their chief and that all of them had ridden away to their distant mountains.

Whatever Tokala might have thought she still said nothing; but the brother saw that she had taken on a soberer mood and that now and then her eyes turned involuntarily to the distant ridges and a wistful expression crept into her face.

And seeing her grow pensive Keyahanhi had said things to make her laugh and forget. As a rule he had succeeded.

This morning, however, after many days of lonely travel he noted, upon the flat lands of the Long River country, his sister's gaze directed to the far horizon. Looking in that direction Keyahanhi saw a score of specks moving like ants upon the far, green prairie. And then he saw the sister's cheek flush to the colour of early dawn.

Cloud Chief and his Crows were yet guarding the trail of Tokala Noni. Beyond question the Brulé and his warriors would hover within striking distance until the Sioux maiden should no longer need their protection. They were now crossing the country of the Pawnees and Keyahanhi, much as he despised one whom he regarded as a traitor and deceiver, could not but feel a sense of security from this faithful following.

Yet, such is the natural reserve and secret working of the Indian heart, neither brother nor sister would appear to notice the chivalric attendance of the Brulé.

They rode for the most part in silence but, now and then, talking of things farthest from the inner consciousness of each. And presently, in a far-off depression of the prairie, the specks of riders disappeared. And somehow this disappearance operated to create a flow of talk between the two.

"Brother, how long do you think it will be before we reach the Smoky River?" Tokala asked at length. In her voice there was no suggestion of the recent thrill that had set the blood mounting to her face.

"I do not know, sister," Keyahanhi replied, "but this is a strange country which I do not remember in our travel southward. I think that we must, in one or two more suns, reach the river of gray waters and that we will have to swim our horse across. When we get there we shall not be more than the travel of five suns from home."

"And do you think our people will be there already?" asked Tokala.

"It appears to me, little sister," answered Keyahanhi, "that they will not yet have arrived. They were to go with the white soldiers until some matters could be settled. You know how it is when our people are taken to the forts. There are many councils and there is much talk before anything can be done. I think it will be one moon after our arrival before our people will all get in."

Tokala sighed. She was most anxious to rejoin her family friends, and the prospect of living upon the charity of people at Spotted Tail's village was most unwelcome to her. She was a loyal member of her clan, attached to them all with the devoted, unselfish love of her kind. Unquestionably this force of her nature had been a large obstacle in the way of the Brulé's wooing. Had she been an ordinary Sioux maiden she might have followed, at all hazards, the one she loved. She was not an ordinary maiden, but one most loyal to her people in every hazard of their fortunes. To her the Crows were enemies, as were all other peoples who had fought against her nation, and the patriotic maiden, love as she might, stood with her own to the end. Such was Tokala, "flower of the Oglalas."

All that day the brother and sister rode in hopeful and happy mood, often chatting gaily, always taking note of the birds and animals and other small life which abounded along their trail. Keyahanhi's bow and arrows were unfailing in supply of their needs and because of this myriad life which seems to spring, spontaneously, from the soil in the Moon of New Grass.

The sun was perhaps two hands high, and they were riding still upon the level plains, when a sudden vast depression appeared in their front; and a broad

band of flowing water stretched away to east and west, skirted with timber and dotted with islands, like the sudden lifting of a scene from some mysterious under-world.

Brother and sister gave vent to joyful shouts. Here was the river of gray waters indeed! The wide shallow river which had its source in the far mountains and which skirted the southern edge of the Sioux country.

Joyously they rode into the valley, frightening the herds of antelope which hovered along the stream. This was truly the river of abundance. Here the buffalo, deer and antelope were usually to be found when their hunters could find them nowhere else. And here the great white and gray cranes fed upon the flats, and the wild geese and ducks floated upon the current in myriads in their season. Here also were fruits, berries and plums, each in its own proper moon, to be found in abundance.

In all the south land they had travelled over there was no country so beautiful, so fruitful as the broad valley of their own great river. This stream, too, gave them a sense of communication with all the known Indian world and of vaguely conceived countries beyond. For this broad river came from the far mountains and trailed away to the Great Salt Waters of tradition. Inconceivably vast and mighty

was the stretch of the river of gray waters. From a distance, counted by moons and moons of travel, their own people had once journeyed along this river coming from the shore of the sea of salt waters.

So the two rode on entranced, dragging the travois across the grass-grown bottom lands of the Platte. They had reached a mood of exaltation when the senses are lulled to security. They were too happy to think of danger. When they gained a bank of the river they saw that the mountain floods had not yet arrived. Keyahanhi was able to mount behind Tokala, and their pony waded across a current which reached its midside. They were two-thirds of the way over when they came upon a sand-bar which projected far into the stream, extending from a bank lined with cottonwood trees.

"There will be much wood for our fire to-night, sister," said Keyahanhi joyously, "and I will surely kill some rabbits before the sun throws his blanket."

And Tokala assented happily. She was very sure that the brother would be able to provide for their needs.

They mounted the bank and rode among the trees looking for a suitable place to camp. A strong wind was blowing in the direction they had been travelling, and this doubtless had much to do with a lack of discernment which suddenly brought them face to face

with enemies. This and their high elation and the knowledge that a friendly war-party had their movements under surveillance.

They were astonished and dismayed when, coming out from a thick cluster of trees, they confronted a camp of the dreaded Long Knives. Yet there they were, five pale faces, who instantly sprang to their feet with levelled guns.

Brother and sister were appalled and halted uncertainly. They were allowed but a moment to sit inactive. While three of the white men presented their guns two came forward, seized them roughly and flung them off their horse.

In a brief time the pair were tied hand and foot, dragged into the circle of the enemy's firelight, and each made fast with back to a tree.

Their captors, after a hearty laugh among themselves, calmly sat down to eat a meal which had been interrupted.

Keyahanhi and Tokala, when the men were busy with eating, exchanged glances of intelligence. They knew what would happen to these Wasécun, and for a moment there was something like exultation in their faces. Whether themselves were destroyed or not, just as sure as Wi, the sun, had risen and set, would these triumphant, laughing enemies soon lie prone upon the earth.

When the eyes of any were turned in their direction the faces of the Sioux revealed nothing.

After the men had eaten supper one of them produced a pack of cards. They spread a blanket and began a game with which Keyahanhi was familiar. The Dakota was expert at several games of cards, and had picked up some knowledge of the English.

At the beginning of the play one of his captors said:

"Now we'll play seven-up to see who has the girl and after that we'll take care of that hump-backed ——— ——— ———!"

Had the men been content with a single game this story might never have been written. They were evidently in a mood for amusement and the play was long. The captives had almost despaired of rescue when the Brulé and his Crows came. And these came in that silent and unexpected fashion in which tragedies usually arrive.

The last two players had just arisen, one of them with a bitter laugh and gesture of chagrin, when all the near tree trunks spat fire and whistling sticks.

Two men sank in their tracks; one fell across their camp-fire and the others were transfixed with arrows as they fled. Most cunning had been the approach of the Brulé and his Crows.

X

ORIGIN OF A SUN-DANCE

THE day was perfect. The Moon of New Grass had returned and the soft light of the sun fell upon all the prairies; also it fell upon a great circle of teepees pitched upon the flat lands of the Yellow River. No breeze was stirring and a shimmer of heat radiation rendered all objects in the distance distorted as by some spirit hand. Far-away trees and hills were lifted above an earth horizon and made to appear as the woods and hills of skyland territory.

On this day Tokala had gone with her little brother away from the Sioux villages at the Sun Dance, and had wandered among the sand-hills which overlooked the outlying stretches of the Smoky River. Why she had strolled so far from the active life of the great town Tokala could not have told.

She had taken with her a small half-brother Ota, Ota the Beautiful, as he had come to be called among the Oglalas.

Ota was the first-born of Yellow-Iron and The Sky and because his father had said at his birth, "Now

we shall have plenty of boys," the mother had named him Ota, which means plenty.

Tokala, overfond of the little lad, seldom walked without him. Sometimes she carried, sometimes she led the plump and naked urchin, a small edition of his Omaha mother.

Seated in the sand on this occasion, she delayed her return, waiting for Ota to play out his play as Indian babies wish to do when their feet fall in the sands of the Smoky River. To and fro the tiny fellow ran, his feet sinking deep in the white sands, his brown body glinting in the sun, his broad, comely face flushed with unwonted exercise.

It wanted only the devoted admiration of his sister to induce the young one to perform all the cunning tricks of an intelligent Indian baby.

He plunged forth and back in the sea-waves of sand; he sat down in the midst of them and piled about his brown legs heaps which he pretended were teepees. Each of his feet represented five occupants of a teepee; each toe in his imagination was warrior, woman, youth or child.

Again, with wrinkles creasing his fat sides as he bent, the tiny man traced furrows which were to him rivers, trails, mountains—all the phenomena of the landscape which his infantile mind had been able to grasp. Again he piled heaps to form a village of

teepees and other little heaps which represented ponies, and still others for buffaloes and their hunters. All the life of his wild tribe the youngster mapped out and mimicked in the sands.

This play the fond sister looked upon with doting eyes. The little plump body, the perspiring face of the sweating infant, marching about and toiling, called forth the visible glow of self-sacrificing love.

There was in all the Oglala village no person nor object before which Tokala might sit in worship as before this little, fat, waddling brother. Almost he was her god, the sum of all that her longing, her primitive nature, had conceived as the object of her life.

Not until the exhausted lad slept did her eyes stray to the flats below where, in a vast circle, were spread the conical teepees of a number of tribes inhabiting the buffalo country.

Here were gathered choice representatives of the nations, large villages of Pawnees, Crows, Kiowas, Cheyennes and Arapahoes tenting in amity. All these inimical tribes had been gathered because of couriers which had been sent them by the Dakotas.

* * * * * *

A young man of the Sioux, of the Sans Arc tribe, had been from his youth helpless. He had spent years sitting within and before his mother's teepee,

unable to arise. He had never taken part in any of the games or sports of boys.

Because of his sluggish nature he had been named The Creeping Turtle. For seventeen winters he had borne the stigma of this name and the good-natured tolerance of his tribesmen. People said that he had sat so long upon the ground that, indeed, he knew not whether he could walk or no.

In his eighteenth year a remark of this sort aroused him. Two men of the village were passing, and he overheard one of them say, "That lazy Creeping Turtle, if he only thought so he could get up and move about as well as any of us and might help to support his poverty-stricken mother."

Creeping Turtle, brooding upon this, in the stillness of the night when his mother was sound asleep, made a violent effort and suddenly arose to his feet. He was amazed and staggered weakly out of the tiyopa.

Once outside he walked, reeling as he went, thrice around the teepee, and then sat down to rest.

"I can walk," he said, "I can walk, I can walk," and he repeated this again and again.

Presently he got up and once more reeled around the teepee; and then he crawled inside the tiyopa and lay down upon his blanket. All night long his heart sang, "I can walk, I can walk, I can walk."

The boy continued to practice at night, combining the wisdom of the owl and the fox in his movements. Days passed, and each night, when his mother was asleep, Creeping Turtle stole forth from the lodge.

Each night he grew a little stronger, and his heart mounted in exultation. At length he ventured away from the village, stealing forth like a thief, and made a far excursion upon the prairie.

As he went out from the teepees he kept saying, "I wonder if I can run, I wonder if I can run." He repeated these words many times as he walked. It seemed that he could not run. Presently he passed into a deep coulée where there were groves of timber and many rocks. As he walked he kept on repeating, "I wonder if I can run."

Suddenly Mato-osansan, the grizzly bear, reared among some bushes. The bear was very close and roared at the boy. "Ghur!—Aghur-r-r!" said the bear.

Creeping Turtle stopped. "I cannot run," he said, "and this bear is going to eat me. He may as well do it quickly."

He advanced slowly toward Mato-osansan, and the bear moved out from the bushes and walked away. Wimima, the full moon, was shining and the bear could be plainly seen walking off.

Creeping Turtle was surprised that this big grizzly

should run away from him. He had never seen a live bear and he wished to look at this one, so he walked on quickly. The bear kept going faster and faster and presently Creeping Turtle was running. After a time he was surprised.

"Why—I'm running!" he said. "Without any weapons I have chased Mato-osansan!"

He sat down to think about this. For some time he continued sitting with his face in his hands. Then he went homeward, arriving before people had awakened.

Every night thereafter for two moons Creeping Turtle left the village by stealth, went out upon the prairie and into the coulées where he leaped and ran, played at games and threw sticks and stones at the rabbits and the birds which he scared from cover. Continually he became stronger and more able to endure.

In his mother's teepee was an old rawhide lariat which had belonged to his father. This strong and pliable rope the boy began to carry with him on his journeys. On one occasion he found a deer path in a coulée and set his lariat for a snare. For several nights he did this without success, and then he discovered a herd of deer feeding and ran them down the ravine. In this manner he snared a young buck, catching it by the antlers.

When he had the deer fast, however, he had no knife with which to kill and flay the game. So he sped homeward to the village; he reached his mother's teepee under cover of darkness, secured her butcher knife and got away without discovery.

When he again entered the coulée the sun was two hands high. As he came within sight of the snared buck a pair of large red eagles were feeding upon its carcass. These birds had killed the young deer.

The eagles took wing at his approach and Creeping Turtle stood looking after them. Bearing flesh in their talons they flew to an eyrie under the top of a rock-ledge. Ho! there were young eagles up there —red eagles! His heart was fired with desire to capture.

After cooking and eating meat he took his lariat and climbed above the eagle's perch. Peering over a ledge he saw, upon a shelf of rock, a heap of sticks and three well-feathered birds sitting thereon. The eaglets were nearly ready for flight, and they were the red eagles so rarely found in the Sioux country. The tail and the finer wing feathers of such birds were traded at a pony each.

The young Sioux made a loop at the end of his lariat, lowered and swayed the rope to and fro, striking the eaglets and causing them to flop about in alarm. He worried them until at length he

was able to swing his noose over an outstretched wing. The bird he secured and after a number of trials the second and third were drawn up in the same way.

When Creeping Turtle walked into the village with his captives people stared in amazement.

"Why he can walk!" one cried, "and he has caught three red eagles! He must have some powerful charm. Who among us has done so great a thing in many winters? Now indeed this man will be somebody!"

So they called him Wambli Yuza, Catches Eagles, and by this name he was known thereafter.

Catches Eagles and his mother hardly knew want again. The boy kept his eagles in the teepee at night and staked them in front of the door in daytime. His mother or himself was there continually to guard them. The tribe's hunters brought meat and skins, for they desired presents of the red eagles' feathers.

Catches Eagles gave feathers sparingly and only in return for gifts of equal value. He exchanged feathers when others had grown to replace the ones he had plucked. When he had seen twenty winters and had won the name of soldier, Wanagi Wicasta, a bow and arrow maker, made him a bow of buffalo horns, a weapon so stout that only the strongest could bend

it. For several moons Catches Eagles practiced bending this bow until he had mastered it. After a time he was conceded the best bow shot among the Sans Arcs.

Two winters passed and Catches Eagles went on a distant chase after buffaloes. He and his fellows were hunting on a high sage-bush plain and Catches Eagles became separated from the others. He had ridden a considerable distance when he saw a buffalo bull come upon the plain. He gave chase, riding swiftly and sending a number of arrows through the bull's skin. The animal fell and the hunter dismounted and withdrew his arrows. He skinned the game, cut up its flesh, led his horse into a ravine where there was water and grass and picketed the animal. Then he went to the high ground where there was a cool breeze and lay down.

He slept, and while he lay two Crow hunters crossed the ridge. The Crows separated upon high ground, and one came near to where the Dakota had slain the bull. This one dismounted from his horse and went softly to peer into a water coulée, where he supposed the successful hunter or hunters might be camped. He did not know whether or not the bull had been killed by one of his own party. When he discovered the Sioux pony he crawled swiftly back toward his own. This Crow was a

coward and sought immediately to escape. Suddenly he came upon the Sioux lying among the sage bushes. Catches Eagles awoke and sat up rubbing his eyes. The Crow was frightened. He dared neither to run nor to strike.

"How," said Catches Eagles, seeing the Crow upon hands and knees. He motioned the man to be seated beside him, and the Crow sat down upon his left. Catches Eagles produced a pipe and tobacco.

"How," he said, "we shall smoke and talk for a time and then we shall gamble for the scalp. See, I have plum stones." He took some from his pouch and showed them. Catches Eagles talked in the trade and sign language, and the Crow understood that he intended to throw plum pits to see which of them should die. The stranger sat smoking and trembling. He gave the pipe to Catches Eagles. While the Dakota was lifting it to his mouth the Crow suddenly drew a knife and cut him across the abdomen. Catches Eagles bent swiftly forward and seized his bow and arrows. The Crow had leaped to his feet as he struck and he backed away shouting and flourishing his knife. Catches Eagles could only shoot bending forward lest he be disemboweled. Two arrows the Crow dodged then he turned to run and an arrow struck him in the neck. He tumbled forward and died.

Catches Eagles held the skin of his wound together with one hand and arm, and walked to the buffalo's carcass. He sat down, cut slits in the two lips of his wound and tied them together with sinews. Then he made a band of the buffalo's fresh skin, fastening it about his waist with the flesh side next his body. Having done this he counted a coup upon the Crow. Then he took the scalp trophy, mounted the enemy's pony and rode away to his camp.

On the way he prayed to Waniyan Tanka, the Most Mysterious, and to Wakinyan the spirit of thunder, making a vow. "Hear me, pity me, that I shall recover from this great hurt," he prayed. "If you will do so, I shall make a sun dance and sacrifice portions of my flesh. In the presence of my enemies I shall do this."

It was night when he arrived at camp and told his story to fellow hunters. These were astonished at his good fortune. To be wounded thus! To count a coup! To take the scalp! To get the man's horse and his weapons! They made these counts on their fingers. Did it ever happen to any one thus before? So they questioned each other while Catches Eagles slept and no one could remember having heard of anything like this.

For many suns Catches Eagles stayed at the buffalo camp, lying on his back. He kept one position

until the skin of his wound healed, leaving him whole. Then the hunters returned, laden with meat and robes, and Catches Eagles became a noted person. The young warriors signified their willingness to follow him.

A snow came and went, and Catches Eagles remembered his vow. He spoke at a council of the older men, repeating what he had promised to the Most Mysterious.

"Now," he said, "let us send runners to the nations bidding them come and dance the sun dance. We shall make a peace at that time as has been done heretofore. Thus I shall be able to fulfill my sacred vow."

The older men agreed to this. "Han, han, han," they said, "let it be as this young man has said." For they were all agreed that Catches Eagles should become a war-chief.

Runners bearing the peace-pipe were dispatched among dwellers of the buffalo country. Most of these people received their couriers kindly and agreed to send delegations to the Dakotas in the moon of best grass.

The Dakotas made ready for those that were to come. They selected ground for the sun dance, raised a semicircular dance lodge and the teepee of preparation. Catches Eagles, because of whose miraculous

deliverance from death this sun dance had been called, was chosen master of ceremonies.

Such was the origin of this sun dance on the Smoky River (Niobrara) as it is told by old men of to-day—men who bore a part in the full blood of youth.

Wi, the sun, had approached near to the earth when Tokala and her small charge descended from the sand-hills. They came down the long slopes, Tokala leading the brother whose rest had served to fill his energetic body with enthusiasm for the journey. The small one shouted, stamped, and swayed to and fro pulling at her hand as he attempted to rush after every flower, animal or bird which came within his range of vision.

It was Tokala who was weary when they reached the flats of the river. Here a new excitement awaited. Ota, who had seen three winters, knew the meaning of a play now making upon the plain and insisted upon remaining to watch a pony race.

Tokala found a seat upon a boulder of the white rocks, which abound along the Smoky River, and waited for the race. The goal was not far away. It was another white rock around which were grouped numbers of gaily dressed young blades gathered from the allied villages. Five bow-shots up the valley a group moved in confusion, as pigmy men and

animals, against a red horizon. These were preparing to start the race, and just as Wi had sunk his fiery disk behind the sand-hills, like a flight of projectiles, there issued from the farther group a squad of horsemen. A score of them, in a wild route, came tearing down the valley; and Ota, the vigorous infant, stood upon his rock and yelled like any barbarian of them all.

One, two, three riders forged ahead of the others. These three were almost neck and neck as they neared the white stone which marked their goal when suddenly one reared himself upon the bare back of his pony and wielded his quirt with superhuman energy.

His fierce yells pierced the ear, like the screams of an eagle, and he passed the stone two lengths ahead of his fellows.

This one, swooping about in a circle and shouting his triumph, discovered Tokala upon her perch.

Raising a hand and shaking it aloft he advanced toward her, his bearing that of a victor and his face darkly flushed with triumph. His white teeth gleamed as he saluted. Sitting his horse proudly for a moment he spoke.

"I have won ten ponies from the Kiowas," he said, "and at the close of the sun dance I shall tie them all, with others, in front of Yellow-Iron's teepee."

Tokala's face coloured redly with deep annoyance.

"You had better tie your ponies," she said, "where there is a chance that they will be accepted."

It was Catches Eagles who had thus confronted her.

XI

PRELIMINARY AMUSEMENTS

THE villages gathered for the sun dance were pitched upon a second bottom of the Smoky River under the shadow of Bear Butte. The meeting has since been known as the Bear Butte Sun Dance. At this circle of sun worshippers more tribes had come together in amity than had so met in two score of winters.

It was the custom of each tribe of the buffalo country, once in five or more years, to invite its neighbours, friends and enemies to attend a sun dance. The laws of the Medes and the Persians were not more rigidly adhered to than an ancient rule of conduct which bound each member of the inviting and the visiting tribes to shape his conduct to the end of giving no offense. On the road to and from the sun dance the visitors might travel in absolute safety from attack by any people which had sent its delegation. These were the great scenic gatherings of the northern aborigines. The teepees were pitched in a circle a mile or more—sometimes as great as three miles—in diameter; and the lodges were grouped in

contiguous villages. Each tribe had its allotted section of the circle. One opening only was left for the going and coming of crowds, and this, by ancient usage, was invariably on the north. In the centre of the greater circle was raised the dancing lodge, a semicircular enclosure of woven bush, in two barricades forming an open court. Near to this was the teepee of preparation where the candidates, who proposed to make offerings to the sun, were purified and made ready. In the centre of a circle, described by the inner arc of the dancing lodge, was set the decorated sun-pole, around which were performed such feats of self-scourging and endurance as has been seen nowhere since the days of the Flagellants.

These pains of the flesh were endured to win favour of the most powerful creature of the Most Mysterious —the life-giving Sun.

At the Bear Butte Sun Dance were gathered, by Dakota reckoning, more than ten times The Great Count, doubtless more than twenty thousand people. The circle, years afterwards, could be traced upon a soil trampled by pony hoofs and moccasined feet. Reaching from river to sand-hills, the complete circuit was some five miles in circumference. Quite possibly there had never been called together representatives of tribes covering so great a reach of terri-

tory. Nearly the whole aggregation of the plains people was represented, from the Yellowstone to the Rio Grande. Of the tribes, who may certainly be recorded as having sent large delegations, were the Crows, the northern and southern Cheyennes, the Omahas, Pawnees, Comanches, Kiowas, Utes, Apaches and Assiniboins.

That the miraculous recovery of a wounded Dakota should have induced such a gathering was owing to that importance which is attached to strange and apparently mysterious manifestations and to the eager interest of all the tribes in this great dance. Yet these sufficient motives were aided by momentous and fortuitous circumstances. The plains folk had, years since, awakened to danger at the encroachment of hoards of aliens who had peopled the eastern valley of the Great River. Here and there a tribe had raised its feeble hands to repel the invasion, and all had read their doom as certainly as later they saw it when the iron horse drove across their hunting ground. Of late reports had reached them that the Long Knives were fighting among themselves, that a great war was in progress toward the rising sun. Ardently they hoped that these enemies would become so weak from their strife at home that the Indian might hope to hold his own. So it was that a slighter pretext might have served to call them together where, in

good fellowship, might be formed a bond of strength against time of need.

A greater mind than any at this gathering might have read the hand of fate in the chain of circumstances which had led to the making of a powerful young war-chief. Catches Eagles was not so small in mind as to lose the significance of a barbaric interpretation. He lived on the heights of elation; and that his self-esteem should have towered mightily, before the end of this sun dance, was but natural. Yet the young brave shrewdly held himself in hand and, in the midst of the gatherings of grave chiefs and warriors, did not attempt to thrust himself into their councils. He bore his part with the younger men and won his share of victories in their contests.

Before there had been a calling of the sun dance, but when it was certain that his fight with the Crow and the recovery from his wound had made him a marked man, his mother had said:

"You should now get married. We have few relatives and you will have but little influence until you have increased our family circle. You should marry several sisters that you may rear a large family and so become powerful."

It was the custom among Dakotas, where a man took additional wives, that he should marry the younger sister of his first. This was sometimes done

until all of three or more sisters were gathered into a single and closely knit family. Thus the Sioux mother had spoken out of her wisdom.

"I cannot marry among sisters," Catches Eagles had answered, "for there is only one whom I wish to wed, and I am not yet great enough to carry presents to her father's teepee. After the old men have granted my request and have called a sun dance, that I may fulfill my vow, I will ask Tokala Noni to be my wife. Then I shall belong to the clan of Yellow-Iron and so shall have plenty of friends."

Thus was added another link to the chain of incidents and motives which led to this gathering.

* * * * * *

Having met in so great a company, so rarely come together, the people were not in a hurry for the ceremonies of the sun dance to begin. On the contrary they gave themselves up to a season of undiluted enjoyment. The occasion, like that of some great fair of their civilized brothers, called for gayety. Care-free and safe from the lurking danger, which was their inherited portion, their spirits were lifted into the upper world—the world of light and joy and content. There were dances, horse-races, ball games and gambling to amuse. After Wi, the sun, had set, there was the beat of drum and song of the chant which ran around the teepee circle and swelled to a

hum of music which could have been heard far out among the sand-hills. On the crest of Bear Butte one might have sat and listened to the roll of the great camp's drums and the shouting as to the roar and tumult of a distant battle.

At many points in the circuit were gathered groups of dancers who, around their elk-skin drums, moved to the measures and the chant of tribal dances, the Omaha grass dance, the Oglala moon dance, the Cheyenne buffalo dance, the Comanche snake dance, or the whooping bear dance of the Assiniboins. One might choose his part among all these festivities; for freedom, without license, reigned in the big circle.

One evening in front of Yellow-Iron's teepee sat the chief, Tokala, The Sky and Keyahanhi. Before them—and for their special delectation as it appeared —the Cheyennes were dancing, assisted by many members of other tribes, their buffalo dance. It was a gay and exciting scene.

A fire had been built of aromatic sage bushes and around this, arranged in oblong rows, were arrayed the skulls of many buffaloes. It was to these buffalo heads that each dancer made his offering of strings of beads, of pipe and tobacco, of necklaces or charms, as he entered or retired from the circle. Before these he burned incense of sweet grass. Around the fire,

and its ring of buffalo heads and heaped-up offerings, the dance was continued.

This ceremonial fête of the northern Cheyennes was one of the most fascinating of Indian dances. In this there was nothing of the violent outbreak attendant upon the scalp or bear dances. This dance was intended to propitiate the ancient Great Grand Father of buffaloes upon whose favour the hunter must depend for success. Unless his thoughts were pure, his heart good and his spirit inclined to generosity, a hunter might not expect the Great Grand Father of buffaloes to send his children within the range of arrows. So the Cheyennes performed this dance in an exalted mood. They made elaborate preparation. First they retired to their sweat-lodges, stripped themselves and purified their bodies. Each then donned his most costly ornaments, his buffalo head-dress, his chiefest necklaces and armlets, his most powerful charms, and only thus arrayed ventured to bring his offerings within the charmed circle.

Such ceremonies exalted the spirit, and the mind was uplifted to look upon things of the upper world. All the good spirits were invoked and the thunder beings at this time lost their power to harm. No bolt could strike, no arrow reach a vital part, when the Cheyenne had properly prepared himself to enter upon the buffalo dance. His bearing, his every at-

titude, proclaimed his exalted mood, and his face and eyes shone with the spirit of benevolence. Because of its fascinating nature, braves of the visiting tribes —of imaginative mood—were eager to join in this dance. Thus it was that the family of Yellow-Iron, honoured by the ceremonial fête in front of their own section, looked upon a most unusual scene—the flower of the young men of all the assembled tribes taking part in the Cheyenne national fête.

Among those who came on, dancing and retiring alternately, were three whose splendours of dress were remarked and admired by all onlookers. These were Dancing Bear of the Cheyennes, Cloud Chief of the Crows, and Catches Eagles the Sans Arc master of ceremonies.

Dancing Bear had donned the trailing war-bonnet of eagle feathers which is worn by those entitled, upon such occasions. His head-dress, however, was of uncommon quality and carried the tail feathers of twenty-five bald eagles. The bonnet was surmounted with a buffalo scalp and horns—the horns tipped with phosphorus. His war-shirt was of elk-skin painted in figures of red and green and his triple necklace was of elk's teeth and shell pearls. His leggings, with a "dancer's fringe," were rubbed in yellow ochre and beaded in the figures of horseshoes and of hunters following the trail. Moccasins and all else in

his dress were of elaborate pattern to match. He carried a "dancing stick" of buffalo horn, the handle of which was decorated with ermine skins and coloured ribbons.

Catches Eagles wore a gorgeous bonnet, a top-dress of the red eagles' feathers, with a fringe and trailers of scarlet swan's-down. His shirt was of trader's red cloth, hung with fawn-skin fringes and the sleeves were trimmed with hawk bells. His leggings also were of the Sioux pattern, short, fringed behind, with decorations of geometric figures plaited in porcupine quills.

Cloud Chief was resplendent in a dress which offered an innovation to the customs and costumes of the tribes. His shirt was of blue velvet with bands of white beads entwined in snake-like twists around the breast and waist; the leggings were of soft fawn-skin rubbed in red ochre and decorated in charm-figures of black beadwork. The moccasins of yellow elk-skin were beaded all over the uppers in turquoise blue; his arm bracelets of snake-skin were plaited in stained porcupine quills and had pendants of the down and tails of scarlet tanagers. His necklace was of the claws of grizzly bears strung in double rows and, appended to this, was a broad band of swan's-down stained in yellow, green and red. A pipe-bone breast-plate, made of the polished inner joints of

crane's wings, was strung with rows of Navajo silver beads and fringed with hangers of buckskin, spangled with small shells. The crowning achievement of his dress was not the eagle war-bonnet, which fills the requirements of the plains Indian for dressing the head, but a trailing dress of the tail, and the black-tipped, wing plumes of the white crane. These he wore in a trail to his heels in their unstained native growth, and surmounting them, upon the crown, were two immense buffalo horns, black, but scraped so thin as to seem almost transparent.

This dress of Koska, one time of the Brulés, was greatly admired among the onlookers. They were agreed that, upon the whole, Cloud Chief's was the finest costume of the dance.

Dancing Bear, Catches Eagles and Cloud Chief were all Tokala's suitors. Each had announced to members of Yellow-Iron's family that he wished to marry the chief's daughter.

Of the three Dancing Bear was the elder, a man of some forty winters, whose Cheyenne wife was dead. Dancing Bear was not a chief, but a warrior of influence in his tribe, and a man of uncommon character. He was a man of fine presence—of a broad, high forehead, deeply lined face and singularly sweet and winning smile. He was in the active prime of life, a forceful speaker in council and swift to take

action once he had adopted a plan. This man was highly favoured of Yellow-Iron, to whom an alliance by marriage with the northern Cheyennes seemed most desirable.

The master of ceremonies has been introduced, and Tokala had no more ardent admirer than this bold and fortunate young man of the Sans Arcs.

Cloud Chief of the Crows, finding Tokala yet unmarried, had been quick to send a messenger and a gift to a brother of Yellow-Iron—which was the usual custom among the Sioux—saying that, at the close of the sun dance, he should leave ponies with her father and ask for a speedy marriage.

It is safe to say that any maiden of the sun dance circle so sought in marriage must have had a season of high pride.

Until far into the night the dancers exercised their powers of endurance, moving to the music of the big elk-skin drums. Cloud Chief seemed a man transformed. There was hardly a suggestion of the leaping, shouting Koska of the moon dance. He did not leap high above his fellows, nor raise the mysterious voice which could be heard beyond all others, but danced silently gazing outward and away with a rapt visage, moving with the ease and grace of a long practiced athlete. There was no Cheyenne who seemed to enter into the spirit of his ancient and

tribal dance with more perfect understanding of, or feeling for, its mystic nature. With quick comprehension Cloud Chief had grasped the technical measures of the dance, and he timed his steps in perfect accord to the length of the chant and number of the drum-beats.

"Han, han, han!" said Keyahanhi who had watched him closely, "he is quite the finest dancer of them all."

The Sky gave quick assent and Tokala who, in four winters had not seen her lover, remained silent, looking on with a face in which there showed no sign of emotion. She was seated within the shadow of her mother's teepee with Ota in charge, and her attention was frequently called to the shoutings and the sudden breaks for freedom of this animated infant.

To those of his family at hand, who understood the significance of the appearance of those three resplendent dancers, the choice of Yellow-Iron, among Tokala's suitors, was quickly made apparent.

Of the dancing of Cloud Chief and Catches Eagles he took apparently no heed but, on several occasions, with Dancing Bear in the foreground, he was marked in acclaim.

XII

LOVE'S PERPLEXITIES

NIGHT had fallen in brilliant fashion after a perfect day in the new-grass moon. Wimima had almost leaped from beyond the earth into a limpid sky. The grand circle of teepees and the hills around were illumined as by electric light.

Again the drum-beat, the chant and dance, were heard around the circuit of the camps and all was gay festivity. Hardly any in the concourse but were either taking part in the dances and the games or enjoying themselves as onlookers. Of the few who sat in their teepees unheeding, Tokala was one. She had much to digest in sober reflection. But a little time since, Dancing Bear of the Cheyennes had sent to her father a messenger with a gift, saying that he would leave other presents later and would urge upon the Oglala chief that he should give him his daughter to wife. Following this message Yellow-Iron had spoken to Tokala, and his words had left a sore spot in her heart.

"My daughter," the chief had said, "I have this day received a present from a great man of the

Cheyennes. You have seen him—Dancing Bear, the greatest of Cheyenne warriors. The man is a good man and wealthy, and I desire that you shall marry him. He will send suitable gifts at the close of the sun dance and will ask you to return with him to his country. I think that you should consent to marry this man. You have now seen nineteen winters, and it is time that you were mistress of a teepee."

And with this the chief had turned upon his heel and left her. Tokala had had no opportunity to reply and her grief was great in consequence. She did not wish to go away from her people. Nor did she desire a teepee of her own.

And so she sat alone in the open tiyopa. Her gaze was pensively fixed upon the illumined crests of Bear Butte. For a long time she sat and then, by some subtle sympathy, her eyes were withdrawn from the butte and saw only the teepee of Keyahanhi, the mystery worker. Paled by the brilliant moon's light there was the faint reflection of a flame against the decorated teepee folds. Keyahanhi was within. He was often in the habit, even in the midst of festivities, of retiring within his lodge for inner meditation and for communication with spirits of the upper and under worlds.

For some time Tokala meditated, feeling a modesty about intruding upon the sacred functions of

one so set apart as the young mystery priest. But at length her need of counsel and sympathy overcame her reluctance to disturb the brother. She arose and went softly to the lodge of Keyahanhi.

The tiyopa flaps were closed and tied. Tokala bent toward them feeling something of the guilt of those who pry into the secrets of the confessional. A low humming sound, as of the drone of a bumblebee, came to her ear. It affected her curiously. "It is some voice from the upper world," was her innermost thought. The sound was followed by a murmur confused and complex as of a number of musical voices blended in one. Tokala was almost aghast at her own temerity in having presumed that she might interrupt a conference so sacred. She was about to turn softly and steal away when the well known voice of Keyahanhi startled her.

"Sister," it said, "you are at the tiyopa and I will open very quickly. Do not go away—I, your brother, wish to talk with you."

Tokala's approach had been noiseless and her astonishment at the divination of her brother was followed by joyous emotion.

"Since the good spirits have told him that I am before his door," she thought, "Keyahanhi will know the words of wisdom I should hear. Very soon then I shall know what to do."

It was but a moment until the folds of the tiyopa were lifted aside and fastened and Tokala, with reverent tread, entered and took seat upon a rug of badger's skins.

She had always a feeling of awe in entering Keyahanhi's lodge. This was not, however, because the brother made a serious affair of receiving visitors; for Keyahanhi was singularly open and frank—quite free, in fact, from the solemn trickery of the average Wakan man or mystery worker.

Keyahanhi attempted none of the juggleries by which so many so called "medicine men" among the Indians are able to catch the credulous. He was a dreamer and imaginative and his faith in communication with the powers beyond his ken was absolute.

To this child of nature every beast, bird, insect, tree and plant belonged to the world of "people" and each had a message for his ear, capable of interpretation. He had only to hold the ear close to mother earth, keep the heart good and the mind open, to understand the language of the mysterious ones. He believed these also at times capable of understanding certain communications of his own. Besides the embodied creatures of mystery there were people of the upper world who spoke to him in dreams and visions.

His close sympathy with and keen observation of

all the phenomena of the outdoor world enabled Keyahanhi to make such forecasts of events, or interpretation of them, as gave him wide influence among his people.

It was because of the wonders inside his teepee, the mystic messages which were there received, that Tokala entered in a spirit of reverence.

Inside Keyahanhi's lodge the utensils and decorations were all of a mystic nature pertaining to the craft of him who laboured therein. The teepee covering was of the best smoke-tanned elkskin and was checkered with coloured drawings which represented the marvels of a world of mystery.

Around his walls were arranged none of the manufactured fetiches of the average conjuror, but the horns of wild animals, stuffed skins of curious snakes, the mounted wings of brilliantly coloured birds, butterflies, various shells, fossils, and curiously shaped and coloured stones which he had gathered here and there and preserved as marvellous works of the Great Mystery. These were the things of animate and inanimate nature for which Keyahanhi had reverence. Thus the new mystery worker of the Oglalas was living close to nature, shrewdly observant of all her works, and with a spirit attuned for almost marvellous interpretation of those voices of the wilderness which appeal to the man or woman of imaginative nature.

To Tokala his lodge represented a sacred shrine before which her young heart worshipped as devoutly as any devotee at the altar of a church. After she had taken a seat Keyahanhi smoked in silence for a time. Then he laid aside his pipe and looked at her with the eye of brotherly affection.

"What is it, sister?" he asked. "I see that you are indeed troubled."

Tokala had few reserves in her talks with Keyahanhi and The Sky and she answered with apparent frankness.

"I am asked to go from my father's teepee and I do not wish to do so. I love my father and mother and Ota and I do not want to leave them. This evening my father has spoken to me about marriage and my heart is sad."

For some minutes Keyahanhi sat apparently studying the figures on an upturned robe beside him. A little humorous twinkle played about the corners of his eyes. He was yet Keyahanhi the joker.

"Perhaps," he suggested, "your father has not spoken about the right man?"

A wave of colour, half of embarrassment, half of anger, swept Tokala's face. She had wished to be taken seriously.

"I have said," she declared with some asperity, "that I do not wish to marry. Is not that enough?"

"Forgive me, sister," said Keyahanhi soberly, "I did but jest seeing you look so solemn. A maiden does not usually put on mourning when she is invited to enter the lodge of so strong and bold a warrior as Dancing Bear, of so great a leader as Cloud Chief, or of so lucky a man as Catches Eagles."

"I do not wish to marry," again declared Tokala, stoutly.

"Yet Dancing Bear is a very fine man," said Keyahanhi reflectively, "and the Cheyennes are inclined of late to form an alliance with us against the Long Knives. It would be good for our people that you should marry him," he added with shrewd attention in the look he bent upon her.

Tokala went pale and a far-away look came into her eyes. It was evident that she had not come for this sort of advice; that she had hoped for the ready sympathy which she had found in the past—not argument in support of Yellow-Iron's wishes.

Keyahanhi studying her face, despite her recent stout asseveration, saw where her heart was truly engaged and took counsel with himself. After two or three minutes of silence he spoke again.

"Sister, you have seen nineteen winters,"—her father had said this and Tokala scowled fiercely—"and it is unknown among us that a good woman shall live solely for herself. You as the daughter of

Yellow-Iron must become the wife of some man and rear a family as all others of our women do. You have now your choice of three brave warriors ——"

"But I am not allowed to choose!" interrupted Tokala warmly, "my father and others it seems wish to choose for me and that I will not consent to."

Keyahanhi considered before answering. Then he said:

"Sister, if you will not listen to the advice of your father or your friends why should you come to me?"

This grave question heightened the colour in Tokala's cheeks and increased her embarrassment. Keyahanhi was indeed making things very hard for her, which was unlike him. Her flush of resentment was succeeded by inimical silence and for a time the two found themselves seized upon by very unusual moods.

At length Tokala declared herself vehemently.

"I will not marry Dancing Bear—I will not marry Catches Eagles—I ——" she fatally hesitated.

"Will not marry Koska of the Crows," supplied Keyahanhi and then he laughed and Tokala laughed and the ice was broken.

"Let us not talk as people with their hands over their mouths," said Keyahanhi, "but as those whose hearts are open and who speak the truth. You love Cloud Chief of the Crows and you would very quickly

take your place in his lodge if he were a faithful Dakota. This is the truth," he added flatly.

And Tokala grown suddenly sober at his serious tone and manner answered him with truth.

"Yes, it is so; but you, my brother, hate him and so do all Oglalas and for no reason at all!" she asserted passionately.

"It does not appear that you speak justly," answered the brother mildly. "Did you not, when we were overtaken in the southern lands, after the battle with the Long Knives, tell Cloud Chief of the Crows that you were a Dakota and would have none of him? You could have gone with him then or he would have come for you whenever you said the word. You are old enough to choose for yourself now and he again asks you to marry him. Then be his wife and Keyahanhi will be a brother to you both."

And Tokala, after the manner of maidens, buried her face in her hands and cried.

Keyahanhi sought the refuge of his pipe while the sister's tears flowed. His heart was touched for, since she was a child, she had not wept in his presence. While she was still shaken with emotion a shadow fell across the tiyopa and The Sky entered taking a seat beside Tokala.

"Let not my daughter grieve," she murmured,

"nor in Keyahanhi's lodge withhold anything that is in her heart. Lo, my husband has sent a messenger to your uncles and aunts who will come in to-morrow to talk of this man of the Cheyennes who wishes to marry you. I also have spoken to your uncles Pawnee Man and Whirlwind Soldier and with aunts Cloud Bird and Falling Leaf. All these know that you may choose among three warriors and they have thought, as I think, that you should marry where you may bring into alliance those who have hitherto been the most powerful of our enemies."

"Han! han!" exclaimed Keyahanhi, in hearty assent, "my mother is very wise. See, it has now been four winters since Koska of the Brulés became chief of the Crows and lo, there has been no fighting between us. We have not lost so much as a pony at the hands of these our old enemies. Truly this Cloud Chief has remembered his own people to protect them."

It was then that Tokala, in the presence of these dear and sympathetic friends, raised a face shining with happiness. Now that it was certain powerful advocates were to plead for her she had hope that her father was to be alone in his wish to marry her to the Cheyenne. Yellow-Iron was a stern father when need arose but, where family matters were concerned, he had as truly proven a reasonable man, ready to listen

to the counsel of his kinfolk and to bend his wishes to those of the large majority.

Since her parting with Cloud Chief, when he had snatched her out of the hands of white captors, Tokala had had no word from her lover. She had not mentioned his name in any one's hearing in the four years which followed. Though she had been unwilling to listen to other suitors, her people, because of her cheerful nature, did not credit her with bearing grief.

When the Crows had come and the Brulé again was a visitor at the Oglala village, now as a proud and handsome chief whose renown had spread to all the tribes from the Great River of the North to the Rio Grande, Tokala had still given no sign. When the young men and women of the tribes had "ridden the circle," as is the custom before the ceremonies of the sun dance, going two by two man and maiden side by side, and Tokala, as princess among the Oglalas had been paired with Cloud Chief, she had shown a cold and indifferent face as though riding beside a stranger.

The Crow chief had before this sent word to her relatives that, at the close of the sun dance, he should seek her in marriage. In this he had shown all the haste at a lover's command; for the laws of the sun-

dance were such that no alliance of any sort could be formed until the close of the ceremonies.

Secretly Tokala's heart had responded but she had yet to learn the attitude of her elders toward the great Sioux warrior who had joined their enemies. Her father's urging of the suit of Dancing Bear had been her first intimation, and she had feared to find all her clan in accord.

She was ready for the supreme surrender and to hide her great joy she went forth from her friends and, within the safe grounds of the circle, walked far out upon the prairie.

XIII

THE FAMOUS WARRIOR

THE place of the Crows in the encampment of the sun dance was at the south extremity or centre of the tribal circle. They numbered something like two hundred teepees. Cloud Chief had brought several hundreds of his followers to this ancient dance of his people. Four winters had gone since he had mingled with his own folk. In the meantime much had happened to him. From point to point he had won his way as a successful leader of the Absaroke.

He had suffered failures, but his successes had been the more numerous. Besides the deeds which have been recorded he had, in the four years that had followed, led a number of war-parties. In an expedition against the Shoshones his party had achieved a notable success. They had slain forty or fifty of the enemy with the loss of but seven men and had taken a large herd of horses. Again he had gone against the Mandans at the Great Bend of the Missouri. His band of three hundred had attacked a village of earth lodges, manning a thousand warriors, and had held them in a state of siege for eleven suns. This

was considered a remarkable exploit, although the Mandans had successfully withstood the Crows.

In a raid against the southern Cheyennes, with fifty picked men, the Brulé had routed a large village and brought home many ponies; and in a venture against the Blackfeet, in the mountains near the Mussell Shell River, his party gained honour from overwhelming odds. In a thicket of quaking asp the Crows were surrounded by a thousand Blackfoot warriors. Cloud Chief's band fought until they had neither arrows nor cartridges left and scarce a hundred men survived. At the command of their leader and in the middle of the night this remnant sallied forth, knife and tomahawk in hand, each man instructed to fight for himself. Threescore of them cut their way through the Blackfoot lines and escaped.

And for this heroic resistance and flight the young leader of the Crows had been lauded more than for all his victories.

An expedition undertaken the summer before the sun dance had been a long and disastrous one. Its motive had been found in an occurrence of twenty years before. When Wandering Elk was chief of the Crows messengers had come from the far-off Navajos asking for a conference with the Absaroke. This distant people the Crows—like all other northwest tribes—knew by their handiwork, their silver

beads, their horse-hair quirts, their stout blankets and other ornamental and useful articles. And knowing them by their cunning artificers the Absaroke esteemed them highly.

The couriers of the Navajos were commissioned to ask the Crows to join them in "raising a council lodge" among the Colorado mountains. After entertaining them hospitably the Crow chiefs instructed these to return to their village with the message that a Crow delegation would meet the Navajos at the foot of Sierra Blanca in the space of one more moon.

In due season the Crows set out and travelled to the southward. They passed over a wide barren country and were compelled to wander in search of water and game.

They reached a river within sight of the mountain which was their goal of meeting and camped for the night. As they numbered three hundred well-armed warriors the Crows feared no enemies which should come to them after the manner of natural men. But in the night a strange light arose in the east dancing over the prairie, and their outlying guards, noting the phenomenon, aroused the leaders of the camp. These gazed with awe upon a star-flame which passed in curiously measured movements across a river bottom.

"It is a sign," they said, "and we must see to it

that we interpret it aright; for the next thing that happens must surely guide our course."

The next thing of importance that happened was the appearance, on the following morning, of a number of Comanche pony riders. These came boldly into the Crow camp and their leader dismounted and asked for the head chief of the village. In reply one lead him to the teepee of Wandering Elk. The Comanche came before this chief and began to talk in the sign language.

"You are come to meet the Navajos on the other side of Sierra Blanca," he communicated, "and I wish to tell you that those people have planned for your death and that of all your party. You will need to know if I lie or if I speak the truth. Do you seek of me a sign?"

The Crow chief, wondering much at what the Comanche had said, intimated that a sign of mystery or wonder would be necessary to convince him of its truth.

"Good," said the Comanche, "at home you have a white pony with black feet and a black spot upon its right hip. There is also a little red upon one ear. You have a daughter whom you have promised to a chief of the Nez Percés and who has refused your command to marry him. Upon the left breast, beneath your war-shirt, you have the tattoo of an

arrow and an elk's head. In the middle of last night you saw a strange light dancing above the high grass of the river bottom. Is it enough? Have I convinced you?"

Wandering Elk stood for a moment considering this matter gravely; then he looked shrewdly at the Comanche. The man met him eye to eye in a clear gaze and the Crow believed he had spoken truth.

"Truly," said Wandering Elk, "this is something wonderful. It has not happened thus to us for many winters. We will return to our own country."

Forthwith the Crows broke camp and took up the journey homeward. Only after twenty years, and from the idle boasting of a Comanche captive of the Navajos, was it known that Wandering Elk and his party had been shrewdly deceived. When this was known the Navajos again sent a messenger to the Crows. Their runner was carefully instructed. He rehearsed the story as told by the Comanche captive and of the message of Iron Man to the Crows as recalled by the older Navajos.

Old men among the Crows well remembered the expedition led by Wandering Elk; these also remembered his return and the cause therefor.

"After all these winters," said the Navajos, "we are come to do justice. We desire now that you shall meet us at the White Mountain as was ar-

ranged. We choose that our ancient faith with your people shall be kept, that we may not lie under reproach."

In a deliberative council the head men and chief warriors of the Crows considered this question. There was reason to believe that the Navajo runner had spoken truth; that the Comanches of so many winters since had been possessed of secret information and had acted the part of treachery; that they had done this to prevent an alliance between the Crows and their enemies, the Navajos.

The chief speakers at this council—as they were leaders in influence among the Crows—were Cloud Chief and High Bear, the last a medicine man and juggler of uncommon quality. High Bear was the one powerful enemy of the Brulé among his adopted people. On every public question they were pitted against each other. Sometimes the council of one prevailed, sometimes that of the other. On this occasion High Bear strenuously opposed the sending of a delegation so far into the enemies' country and he predicted various misfortunes in the event that his council should be overruled.

Cloud Chief, in an impassioned address, insisted that tribal honour was at stake in the matter. If now the Crows, he said, should refuse to meet the Navajos at the appointed rendezvous they would in-

cur the stigma of being branded as old women and cowards. His speech fired the young warriors of the tribe; and in the end a large party set out for the south country.

These travelled for the space of twenty suns stopping now and then to hunt the buffalo and elk. One night as they were camped at the mouth of a sandy run, tributary to the Arkansas, there burst out of a near coulée a great company of Long Knives. Of sixty Crows but fifteen escaped and these had to make their way homeward on foot. Cunning and swift had been the attack of the white soldiers and not a mount was left the Indians.

Cloud Chief led his forlorn remnant by way of the mountains. Perils beset them from end to end of the long journey.

Near the Three Peaks of the Cache le Poudre they were attacked by a war-party of Utes and but nine of the fifteen came off alive. Of these one was drowned in crossing a swollen river and one fell ill of eating putrid meat and died. At this time the party had neither ammunition nor arrows. They ate such roots and forage as they could find.

Seven soldiers, among them the leader, reached the Crow villages. Only the fact that his life seemed time and again to have been miraculously preserved could have saved the influence of Cloud Chief. High

Bear made most of the occasion. He boasted of his wisdom and cried to the teepee-tops of the fulfillment of his prophecy.

His long series of successes and his mysterious escape from death on several occasions, as related by his surviving comrades, saved Cloud Chief's fame and kept him at the head of the Crow warriors. Thus we find him at the sun dance with history behind him—the peer of any among wild riders of the plains.

Yet the history which had given him standing among the Absaroke is not sufficiently indicated in enumerating his deeds as a fighter.

These alone could not have maintained his position. It was the fine character of the man that, after all, appealed to the wise and influential among the Absaroke. In his first encounter with the Crows, in telling them of his deeds, he had related simple truth exaggerating nothing. Nor was there, at any time, in his most impassioned utterance, the accent of the boaster.

The name of Cloud Chief had been given him because of that first stroke of his genius as a warrior, wrought in the clouds above the Shoshone village. In his craft and daring on that occasion his one time enemies had seen the hand of destiny which marks the young warrior as a born leader of men.

But he had gained another name among the Crows, the name of Straight Tongue, because of his inherent truthfulness. The Absaroke were not long in learning that his least statement of fact could be relied upon. He was also known among them as a man of great generosity, who frequently gave away all the plunder of war or of the chase.

And, such are the ways of the children of the wild, that voice which had driven him forth from the Oglalas was esteemed in the tribe of his adoption not only as a great mystery but as a beneficent gift. Doubtless his judicious use of it had much to do with its having, among the Absaroke, added quality to his fame. He had not raised his marvelous whoop above that of others in the dances; but he had given occasional exhibition of his powers in calling to his fellows during the chase or in their battles.

He had lived among the Absaroke two winters keeping his own lodge and with no eye for the handsomest of Crow maidens, though many an ardent glance was cast upon him as he passed the teepee doors. Then, at the urgent solicitation of his warrior advisers, he sought a wife in Mountain Lamb, a tall and handsome daughter of the Crow brave Touch-the-Sky.

His courtship of The Lamb soon came to have a

piquancy, because of the rivalry involved. It was no sooner intimated to Touch-the-Sky that Cloud Chief was looking toward his daughter than the great medicine man, High Bear, began to court her. It was not the part of her kinfolk to choose between suitors of such quality, and the flattered maiden had no sooner made sure that both these men were seeking her than she played the coquette to perfection. The fascinating graces of the flirt are not all summed up in the arts of Fifth Avenue. The Mountain Lamb led her wooers a pretty dance and succeeded finally in drawing warmth into the suit of the cold-hearted foreign chief.

In the end the splendour of the younger man's deeds prevailed and, after nearly a year of divided courtship, the Mountain Lamb entered Cloud Chief's teepee.

When he arrived at the sun dance the chief had expected to find Tokala Noni married. He had thought of her often; she had never lost her hold upon his heart; but it was not to be expected that a maiden so attractive should remain unmarried. When he learned that Tokala was yet living in her father's teepee his heart beat high with hope revived. Learning that she was free of any pledge of marriage he lost no time in sending an intimation and a present to her relatives.

From the Indian point of view he was free to seek her in marriage. It is doubtful whether a thought of his Crow wife entered his mind as an objection. Tokala would be the wife of his heart. That the daughter of Yellow-Iron could long be ignorant of his history was not, of course, possible. His wife, because of a babe, had remained at the Crow village; yet there were present too many hundreds of his adopted tribesmen for any hope—if indeed the chief indulged in one—that his marriage among them could be concealed.

He sought Tokala openly and without mention, on his own part of any ties at home.

XIV

A FAMILY COUNCIL

THE clan conference at Yellow-Iron's lodge was after all a prolonged and grave affair. The proposals of Catches Eagles, Dancing Bear and Cloud Chief were known to the members of the war-chief's family.

These supposed that they should meet, according to ancient custom, to discuss the claims and merits of each of Tokala's suitors.

The surprise of the relatives was great and some of them were heartily dismayed when Yellow-Iron, after benignly waiting for them to obtain seats and after offering the pipe first to his elders, stated the occasion of calling them together and made no mention of the Crow chief or the Sans Arc Master of Ceremonies.

"A man wishes to marry my daughter;" Yellow-Iron said, "he is a warrior and a hunter whose teepee has never known want. He is also a man of distinction who has gone against the enemy and has counted many coups. He has a fine character and a good and generous heart and he has much property.

He will make a good husband who will provide for his wife and children. I speak of Dancing Bear, of the Cheyennes, and I am ready to listen to words of wisdom."

The eyes of The Sky and Keyahanhi fell and their faces discovered emotion at the close of these remarks. Yellow-Iron, shrewd in council as he was brave in war, had departed from, without violating, the laws of tribal custom. There was no precedent in the experience of any one present which could apply to the exigency of the moment. When a young woman had more than one offer of marriage it had been the custom of her elder kinfolk to discuss the merits of each suitor in turn.

In consequence those present, who wished to serve Tokala, had to search their minds for some phase of argument which should permit bringing in the name of Cloud Chief. Each one keenly realized that Yellow-Iron was the host of the occasion; that he had called them into his lodge for council in a matter which must concern him more nearly than themselves.

The thoughts of The Sky and Keyahanhi were swiftly busy conning the situation from their own and Tokala's point of view. They felt that the matter of presenting her choice and gaining support for her would be difficult. It was evident that the proposal

of Dancing Bear was not to be set aside save for weighty reason. Tokala's warmest partisans knew, as all her relatives knew, that she could not be forced to marry any man. She was of a high spirit and not to be moved by coercion. On the other hand they were equally aware that she would be loathe to grieve her father by marrying against his wishes. Added to this they saw that Yellow-Iron hoped, through their combined influence, to prevail upon Tokala to accept his choice.

The situation was complicated and there was lack of speech and much embarrassment after the war-chief had spoken. To Keyahanhi and The Sky the atmosphere of the lodge became stifling.

After a time the oppressive silence was broken. Pawnee Man, sub-chief and elder brother of Yellow-Iron, was first to speak. The old chief laid aside his pipe and arose very deliberately. He stepped forward to the centre of the circle and spoke with apparent reluctance.

"We who are old," he said, "must soon lay our bones to rest. When we are gone those who are now young must keep green the name of the Lakota. Shall we look to warriors of other nations to do this? Has it at any time been necessary that we should send our women away from home to get them husbands? I look around me upon the young men

of the villages, who are gathered to dance the sacred dance of my people, and I have yet seen no one of the strangers more worthy than our own Oglala youth. And we are but one of the many tribes of the Lakota. Are there not among us the Sans Arcs, the Minneconjous, the Hunkapapas, the Mandans, and our near neighbours the Brulés? There are also present many of the Absaroke who were formerly of our people. Among all these villages of our kinsmen can there be found no worthy young man who wishes to pluck the rose of the Oglalas? I have spoken."

The old chief took his seat with something like a grunt of sarcasm. He was not a talker and seldom spoke in council except in urgent matters. During this talk Yellow-Iron sat, with inscrutable face, looking down his nose. But The Sky and Keyahanhi, as soon as they had been able to interpret the drift of the old man's speech, were elated. Each had maintained that gravity of demeanour which the occasion demanded; but at the close their cheeks had stolen a flush of pleasure. Their eyes shone with soft light as the old man took his seat upon the "robe of honour" which was his in the family circle.

Whirlwind Soldier was next to put aside his pipe and talk. He was a stout warrior in battle but wily and uncertain in council. He spoke now because, as

next eldest to Pawnee Man, it was his turn to deliver an opinion.

"I do not know this man of the Cheyennes," he said, "but there are many brave youths among that people. I think doubtless that Dancing Bear would make a good husband. He would probably provide for his wife and children. Are not the Cheyennes good soldiers and hunters? If therefore my niece be willing to marry him I think that this man would make her a good husband. I have listened to the words of Pawnee Man. I think he speaks wisely. I have said enough."

With a face innocent of duplicity Whirlwind Soldier, having trimmed his sails to go with the wind, took his seat. He had added nothing definitely to encourage Tokala's chief supporters but he had shown somewhat where his inclination lay and The Sky and Keyahanhi were grateful.

Young Wolf, the medicine priest, arose. He was known to be a partisan of Catches Eagles. The master of ceremonies had, in fact, employed Young Wolf as the medium of making his latest ambition known to Yellow-Iron. Possibly the possession of a number of red eagle feathers had something to do with the counsel of Young Wolf. This is what he said:

"I am of those who consult the Great Mystery

upon all questions of import. I think that we should at all times keep the ear open for the voice of the Most Mysterious, and that our feet should follow the trail of wisdom. Last night indeed the Most Mysterious spoke to me in a vision. I had been thinking deeply about this matter, which has called us in council, and was much concerned to know what would be best for my niece. While I was thus pondering the mysterious ones came to me in a dream and lo, I saw a strange thing happen. A Buffalo from the North and a Wolf from the West met in the midst of the dance circle, and lo, a Red Eagle, soaring in mid-air, swooped to the earth and bore them away in its talons. The Red Eagle carried them high in the air and dropped them upon the Hill of Mato-osansan. I went hither thinking to procure meat and skins and behold a great stench arose. The smoke of the offal became a cloud above the hill and descended upon the plain, even upon the dance circle, and the people were compelled to strike their lodges and depart in great haste lest a pestilence fall upon them."

There was no response when the speaker took his seat. The dreams of a medicine priest could affect but little among the solid folk of Yellow-Iron's clan. They were not in the habit of consulting conjurors. Young Wolf had found his clients among people of

less character. He was good-natured, however, and seldom acted in opposition to the purpose of his clan. The Sky and Keyahanhi would have felt grateful for his support where, it now seemed, they must stand alone. For his dream with its pointed implication they cared not a fish's scale.

The brothers of Yellow-Iron had all spoken and all had kept to the etiquette which the occasion demanded. No one had mentioned any suitor but the one whose claims they had been called to consider. As women were allowed to speak on these occasions, Cloud Bird, eldest of Yellow-Iron's sisters, was next to rise. The old lady was of a blunt nature and at no time feared to speak her mind. Her face was flushed with indignation.

"I do not see my niece here;" she said, "doubtless she is out walking where she will meet some fine young chief. I do not think he will wear a Cheyenne bonnet, and if he is as brave as I have heard he will carry the girl off on his pony."

"Han! han! han!" her sisters applauded, and again the faces of The Sky and Keyahanhi shone with pleasure.

Falling Leaf's turn for speech had come. She was a little, wrinkled old lady with a voice thin and shrill as the winter wind. She knocked the ashes from her pipe and peered at her chieftain brother

from under a mop of grizzled hair, stooping toward him as she gained her feet.

"I have understood," she shrilled, "that the medicine-god-woman is dead!" She shook a lean finger pointedly to mark the emphasis. "Surely, somewhere the evil ones are plaguing her ghost!" she added, her voice rising to an attenuated scream. Then she flounced down upon her robe.

The relatives were for the most part astonished at the boldness of aunt Falling Leaf. The tiny old woman had bearded the lion in his den; and if Yellow-Iron had roughly ordered her out none of her sisters-in-law would have felt surprise. To shake the finger at one in his own lodge was a very grave offense. Save a slight wrinkling about the corners of the eyes, however, and which might have indicated a humorous appreciation, the chief gave no sign.

The younger sister Three Owls spoke with reluctance and evidently from a sense of duty.

"I have always been very fond of my niece," she said, "and I desire that she may make a good marriage and live long and be useful to her people."

Save for The Sky and Keyahanhi this closed the case for the defense. The brothers and sisters of The Buffalo Woman, whose turn came next and who, on the women's side were entitled to speak as

mothers of Tokala, fell in line with the wishes of their chief. To the last individual each spoke in praise of the Cheyenne warrior, Dancing Bear. Each one seemed to have come prepared to support Yellow-Iron and several of them were loaded with information, gathered among the Cheyennes. The Buffalo Woman's brothers Turning Eagle and Spotted Horse were able to relate many deeds to the advantage of Dancing Bear. The fact that all his people spoke well of him was adduced as a powerful argument in his favour. At each point scored by his partisan relatives Yellow-Iron showed appreciation. They had primed themselves with information without his knowledge and the thorough and hearty nature of their support surprised and pleased him.

"Han, han, han," he assented with enthusiasm, when a strong point was made in his favour.

When all his wife's relatives had been seated Yellow-Iron's satisfaction was evident. He would have been glad to have had his own brothers and sisters heartily with him in making the choice of a husband for Tokala. As no one of these had said anything against the Cheyenne he chose to ignore a veiled meaning in the remarks of several of them.

There was but one speaker who still had the right to be heard in this council, and that was Yellow-Iron's wife, The Sky. It was the custom among the

Sioux that any member of a family thus called for consultation might, if he or she chose, speak by proxy.

The Sky did not arise. She turned her eyes upon her husband, and said, "My son Keyahanhi will speak for me."

Neither she nor Keyahanhi had now any hope that this conference would result in favour of Tokala's choice.

Keyahanhi advanced within the circle and began with diffidence. He spoke at first in a low voice yet with much emotion.

"I am but a youth," he said, "and weak in council. What matters it then what I shall say? Tokala Noni is my sister, and the heart of Keyahanhi can have no wish that is not hers. Rather than see my sister married to a man whom she does not love I would offer my broken body as a sacrifice. Here am I; let me be slain if I speak not the truth. There is one who is now war-chief of a great nation who has long wished to marry my sister. Need I speak that man's name? Does not every one of the clan of Yellow-Iron know that Cloud Chief loves my sister and that Tokala Noni would die sooner than be the wife of a Cheyenne? Why the folly of this discussion? It appears that we have talked against the wind. Who is he that could coerce Tokala Noni?

He who proposes to do so had best raise his hatchet and strike her dead at his feet. And thus would I do sooner than put her captive into the arms of a man whom she could not follow willingly.

"It appears to me that we have overlooked some things in this council. I am aware that the Cheyennes have many brave warriors and good men among them. An alliance with them is desirable. But if alliances are to be made by marriage let us consider the Absaroke. One of our own nation has lately become chief war-leader among them. Four winters have passed, and these people who were deadly enemies have not since struck at a Dakota. We have not lost a pony or a dog by the hand of an Absaroke since Koska, the Brulé, became head chief of that people. The Absaroke are three times more numerous than the Cheyennes. To send Tokala Noni among them as the wife of Cloud Chief will be to bind them to us by a tie which cannot be broken during her lifetime. We shall make a peace; there will be no war between us when their chief has taken the rose of the Oglalas into his lodge. I have spoken."

The faint heart with which Keyahanhi had begun to talk had quickly departed from him. He had suddenly felt—plainly felt—the influence of a good spirit, and his heart grew strong. Before the finish he spoke boldly, as one having authority, and when he had

ended the applause of Yellow-Iron's elders, who had first spoken, was hearty and delighted.

The Sky who had been affected to tears now sat expectantly smiling upon her husband.

"We will not talk further of this matter at present," said Yellow-Iron. His face was inscrutable in its gravity, and his guests understood that the meeting had been dismissed.

XV

THE SUN DANCE

IN the moon of best grass they were ready to begin the ceremonies of the sun dance. The Oglalas had already completed a semicircular lodge; and to give room for large exhibition they had made the half-enclosure to cover more than one hundred yards between extremities. The cutting of the sun-pole had been left for the opening of the dance.

When they were ready for this a woman consecrated to the task was sent to a coulée among the sand hills where, after praying to the sun, she chose a tree which was to serve as the sacred emblem of the ceremonies.

When this had been done a troop of tried warriors, led by the woman and followed by crowds of onlookers, rode to the pine hills. Upon arrival the woman halted before the tree she had selected.

Having indicated the tree she offered a second prayer to the sun. When she had finished she raised her hatchet and advanced swiftly upon the tree; she paused at its root, turned slowly, facing each point of the compass four times, and then struck a vigorous blow. Leaving her hatchet embedded in the green

trunk she retired quickly. Five warriors came forward in alternation, struck the tree and returned to the ranks. The woman was called to give the finishing blows. Upon the fall of the tree the war-party, crowding upon each other, sprang forward and each hit the trunk with his coup-stick.

The pole was then trimmed and attached to the travois of a pony. Led by the troop which had attacked the sun-pole, the concourse of mounted riders rode back to their encampment.

After entering at the north, riders, to the number of several thousands, formed in semicircular line—a line which extended one-fourth the way around the area. With the ends of this line in the van the troops advanced at a swift gallop, each rider bending forward and waving at the earth a stick to the end of which was attached his or her individual wotawé or mystery charm. The ends of the line, however, rode more slowly than its centre and they swept forward, whirling their sticks, shouting at the tops of their voices, until the centre had advanced to the front and the whole of the enclosed area was covered by the charge. Then the order of attack was reversed and from the foot of the circuit they counter charged. In this manner all evil spirits were driven from the earth.

On the following morning they raised the sun-pole,

planting it in the centre of a circle described by the arc of the sun dance lodge. At a proper time designated by a crier, who went the rounds of the encampment, candidates for the honours of the dance gathered at the lodge of preparation. After them followed the famous mystery men of their tribes, who were to supervise the ceremonies. Among those present were Fire Man of the Pawnees, Eagle Elk of the Crows, Dust Maker of the Kiowas, Touch-the-Cloud of the Arapahoes, and Keyahanhi of the Oglalas. Each of these wise men prayed in his own manner to the Most Mysterious and offered incense, of burning sweet grass, to the sun.

Each of the candidates, to the number of thirty, was asked in turn to declare to a mystery man his intent of endeavour in the trial to come. They arose one at a time. But little variation was noted in their declarations save in the matter of small details. One was to "dance to the pole," another "to the post," each with skewers fastened under some portion of his skin, and to continue to dance until he had broken away. One chose that he should dance a certain period of time before allowing his skin to be cut; another that he should "keep to the pole" so long before attempting to break loose; another that he should be suspended by the skin of his back. Of such nature were the self-imposed tor-

tures—made in all serious intent and with religious fervour—of these ambitious young braves.

Catches Eagles was the last to declare his purpose which was to dance from sun to sun—twenty-four hours—with the skewers in breast and arms, taking neither food nor water. Among the workers of mystery there was commendation of this young man's devotion.

Each candidate had fasted and been purified in the vapour bath and at the close of "preparation" criers were sent forth to call the people together in a semicircular concourse facing the sun-pole. Much time was consumed in completing the gathering.

When the sun was four hands high twoscore of elkskin drums, beaten by one hundred and twenty men, boomed the announcement that the sun dance was on. Leaping like deer from covert four hundred braves, naked to the breech cloth, and with bodies painted, each in individual designs, sprang into the enclosure and began the first ceremonial dance. These circled like a flying army, shouting and letting fly their arrows at the sun-pole. For the space of an hour or more this continued, the shooters aiming their arrows so that the weapons should pass away without injuring the onlookers.

When this performance was finished four children from each village were brought into the ring to have

their ears pierced. This was a ceremony of honour and the parents of the children gave to the needy, ponies and other property. Each child to be so honoured was attended by its mother or nearest female relative, who laid it upon its back on a new buffalo robe or fresh blanket. A mystery worker of the tribe came forward, made signs and passes and spoke charmed words above the child's head. Then with an awl of keen point he pierced each ear and attached a pendant of Navajo silver, copper or other metal.

While this was doing criers upon the outskirts of the assembly were announcing the gifts of the parents. Blankets, trader's cloth and much other property were distributed. The ponies to be given away were herded within a ring of youths. The recipients, who were among the very poor, were aligned—equi-distant from the point of outlet—and as each gift of a pony was "cried" and the animal turned out of its human enclosure the donees scrambled for possession.

The ceremony of the chaste young maidens followed that of the initiation of the children. Attired in their best robes a large company of young girls, gathered from all the tribes, entered the ring and circled four times around the sun-pole. Then in turn each went forward and touched the mystery tree in

declaration of her virginity. It had been told these young girls that if one of them should "lie to the sun" death or disease must quickly follow her declaration.

When the young women had retired the candidates entered the enclosure for their dance. Each was again obliged to announce what he intended to do and the declarations which had been made to the mystery men were repeated. After this the men danced until night fell when they rested for the trial of the flesh which was to begin the next morning.

The sun was perhaps two hands high when the people again gathered before the lodge of the sun. All preparation had been made and each candidate was now stretched upon his back while the mystery workers cut his skin and inserted skewers of deer's horn or of wood through the slits. He was then attached by a rawhide rope to post or sun-pole.

The vital ceremony now began. The young men threw themselves back upon the thongs which held them, fastened their eyes upon the decorated top of the sacred sun-pole and danced.

It was no mark of cowardice or weakness that one should cry out with pain when so engaged; yet the young men set their teeth in stern resolve and for a time no groan of distress was heard.

Until sunset the drums boomed and the chant of

the tortured rose in high-keyed wails. The people kept their places looking upon the frenzied efforts of the dancers. Some of the weaker of these fainted and were brought to by having water thrown upon them or were borne away to take up their tasks later.

Those who declared their purpose of breaking away at once were presently heard to groan and lament, praying to the Most Mysterious to assist them in their efforts. Such lamentations were expected and counted nothing against the manfulness of those who indulged in them; those who swooned were also exonerated from any fault.

A half-dozen of the more hardy braves, and among these Catches Eagles, danced valiantly, bravely chanting faith in the powers of their own miraculous wotawé. This they did until the sun was hidden.

When Wi had dipped beneath the earth the assembly gradually dissolved and each family returned to its teepee for the evening meal.

* * * * * *

On the first and second evenings of the sun dance maidens of the villages were wont to go strolling and at such times they expected to meet and to speak to young men who had sought their favour during the encampment.

Usually the young women went in pairs or groups on these occasions; but there was no law of custom which prevented wandering alone and Tokala chose to isolate herself from others.

At the distance of five or six bow-shots from the Oglala village, going toward that of the Assiniboins, there was a white boulder which was the monument of many a solitary vigil. To this rock Tokala repaired because she wished to be alone with her happiness.

Two suns had passed since the family council had met to consider the bestowal of herself in marriage. Tokala had been left in suspense until just before criers had called the people to assemble on that morning. The Sky had gone with Ota to the lodge of Keyahanhi, and Yellow-Iron had spoken with her.

"My daughter," he said, "three men of the villages here have sent presents to me and each has desired that you shall enter his teepee. I called together your uncles and aunts that we might properly consider the matter and it is determined that you shall marry Cloud Chief of the Crows. When he has done those things which are proper I desire that you shall become his wife. That is all."

Tokala had said nothing. She could not because of the confusion of her sudden happiness.

All day her heart had sung within her—in the midst of the great crowds, the noise of the drums, the chanting and the dancing.

Wimima, the moon, was shining when Tokala reached the rock of the solitary. She sat for a long time upon the boulder. She gazed upon the broad, comely face of Wimima, wife of the sun. In that benevolent presence among the million lesser lights Tokala read her augury of happiness to come.

"Oh, Wimima," she prayed, "look upon me always with kindness; let me be to my husband all that his heart can wish; give me strength to live as a Dakota wife should live and also as the wife of an Absaroke; that I may bear my burdens without complaint. Listen, oh, Wimima, grant my prayer!"

XVI

DANCE OF THE STRONG MEN

THE people of the villages gave themselves up to enjoyment. This was the custom of the sun dance. At twilight of evening the candidates were deserted by all save the mystery workers and such attendants as were necessary.

At the Assiniboin village there was a fête which called out the larger part of the people. This was an innovation upon the Mandan "Dance of the Strong Men." Only chief warriors, partisans and great leaders, took part and the flower of the men of the buffalo plains were engaged on this occasion.

Each brave came arrayed in his dress of state and, within the recollection of the oldest present, there had never been seen together so many great figures stepping to the measures of a chant.

An enumeration of those who danced at the Assiniboin village would suggest many pages of history. Among those present and active were Red Cloud, American Horse, Spotted Tail, Gall, High Wolf, Sitting Bull and Yellow-Iron of the Sioux; Cloud Chief, Gray Bull and Stands Alone of the Crows; Tall Buffalo and One Man of the

Comanches; Chief Mountain of the Blackfeet; Ouray of the Utes; Yellow Sun of the Pawnees and many other well known fighters and leaders.

At this dance there were none of the usual emblems or symbols displayed. In its ordinary performance it was a unique custom. On this night it was a fête extraordinary, in honour of the master of ceremonies. Dancers did not move around a fire, but within a circle of fire-poles. These poles were light saplings of ash, topped with knots of pitch-pine and attended by boys, whose duty it was to replace each knot as the blaze died out.

No drums were beaten except as signals. The dancers moved to and fro in platoons—the space of one's body apart—in which each alternate man passed through the opposing file leaping on either foot to the measures of a chant in which any of the onlookers might take part. And their repetitive songs were of the deeds of strong men.

Those who took the chief part sat in long rows under the lights and in front of the audience, and only danced at intervals and in brief measures in which each platoon passed to and fro a certain number of times. Much of the time was spent in rest, smoking or talking.

These intervals were filled by some voluntary,

usually an old man, who walked with stately tread forth and back between the lines reciting his deeds of war, of diplomacy, or of the chase. With gesture and mimicry these hale old warriors recounted their exploits. When one had touched upon some particularly daring or praiseworthy deed the drums emphasized his recital with a single "Boom-bomm!" as explosive as the bursting of a shell.

No one was obliged to listen to these monologues save half-a-score of drum beaters who gave them strict attention.

When called to dance the platoons leaped to their feet as a single man. This was at a signal, again the sudden boom-bomm! of two drums whose beaters sat at the ends of the cleared area. In some occult manner the drummers seemed to divine at just what instant the performers were ready for exercise. It was a fascinating fête and the chief attraction of the moment.

This dance had been arranged by Catches Eagles, master of ceremonies. It was a diplomatic move on his part, and one worthy of an older and wilier brain. As has been said the election of a man so young to be chief marshal at a sun dance was unknown. The youth who had been so fortunate in the choice, while he felt a large measure of exaltation, had been shrewd enough not to let this appear on the surface. He

was looking to further advancement, and very possibly was duly grateful to the elders of his tribe for his momentary elevation.

This dance of Mandan origin and of the weaker tribe present, as he had planned and announced it by criers, was his boldest stroke so far. He had set his mind upon the problem of awakening a personal interest in himself among the noted men foregathered. The dance of the strong men offered an opportunity and he had grasped it in rather a masterly way. The forth and back movement of the platoons to the rhythmic chant of a multitude was an inspiring performance. It was success beyond the expectation of its originator. It was the Mandan dance in name chiefly and to the measure of its acceptance was added the value of novel emotions.

High chiefs danced or not as they chose. When one left his line to go among the onlookers another sat in his place, and the lines were kept practically unbroken.

The Sky and Tokala sat together and, as usual, the younger had Ota at her side. So lively an infant could by no means be kept in bed while his elders were at the dances. Wide awake as an owl, his whoops were as frequent as the hoots of that night bird. Tokala and The Sky were very proud on this evening. It appeared that the husband and

father had never shown to such advantage. His dress was superb. He had on clean, newly-beaded buckskins, the last shirt and leggings which together they had made for him, and the war-bonnet which had been fashioned in the south country. To his head-dress The Sky and Tokala had made additions in ornaments until it was gorgeous beyond any save the one worn by Cloud Chief.

Yellow-Iron and the Absaroka chief were considered the striking figures in this dance of the strong men. Cloud Chief's dress was materially different from the one he had worn at the Cheyenne Buffalo Dance. A bonnet of war eagles' feathers, white, with black tips, and tasseled in the down of scarlet tanagers, adorned his head. Leggings and shirt were of yellow fawn-skin, plaited in various figures with stained porcupine quills. For ornaments he wore a pipe-bone breast-plate, a string of silver beads which he had taken from the Susuni, his necklace of grizzly bears' claws, arm-bracelets of solid copper and curious beads. Never had he appeared so handsome. He knew at last that he was to marry Tokala; for in some fashion a little bird had carried the news of Yellow-Iron's decision. The chief of the Crows knew not only that her father had given consent, but that the sweetheart of four years agone was still his own. He was happy and he danced as one inspired.

Yet there was nothing in his movement of the leaping, shouting Koska of the Brulés. His conspicuousness was only in the allowable splendour of his dress. In manner he was wholly unassuming and he did not lift his voice above that of his elders in the chant. He had learned his lesson in the long ago, and was now the modest and amiable young leader of fighting men. The heart which had been his for so many winters was near to bursting with pride as the Oglala maiden sat, looking upon him without reserve. He was to be Tokala's husband and all the world would know it soon; she felt no diffidence in showing pride in her splendid warrior.

When after a time he left the line and came and sat near to her, in the midst of her clan, she talked with him as she might have talked with Keyahanhi. It was all very simple and natural and delightful. Friends were about her and when the young man, fresh from his exercise and with shining eyes, dropped upon the ground confronting her every face in the clan of Yellow-Iron was aglow with pleasure.

Cloud Chief returned on several occasions to take a seat confronting Tokala. In time most of the members of her clan gathered near. Pawnee Man, Whirlwind Soldier, Falling Leaf, Cloud Bird and a number of others close of kin formed a group around The Sky and Tokala. The significance of this

family party could not fail to be understood by any who knew the members.

Yellow-Iron's clan showed its pride and satisfaction in the match, about to be made by a favourite daughter, as plainly, yet as decorously, as might have been done by a Fifth Avenue group in an opera box. And Tokala accepted the homage thus paid in the royal manner of the favourite of a clan.

Even her small charge Ota, took kindly to a new accession to the family circle. After he had a second time taken a seat near Tokala Cloud Chief became a favourite with the youngster. Presently the infant struggled away from his guardian, waddled gravely to the side of the chief and sat down, crossing his fat legs and posing himself after this new model among his warrior friends.

At this grave mimickry of the beloved *Cinca* of their clan there was a hearty laugh, and every face in the family gathering showed appreciation.

Cloud Chief turned to the child, his own white teeth gleaming with pleasure, took from his arm a bracelet of spotted, or "snake" beads, unwound the strings and slipped them over the small lad's neck.

"Han! han! han!" acknowledged all the kinfolk and many others who were near enough to see the action. And the tiny fellow, usually full of high spirits and ready to shout his small pleasure and

commands, responded only by a stiffer and more stately pose. A flush crept into the round cheeks and stayed there, and the large eyes shone like black diamonds.

XVII

THE BITTERNESS OF SUCCESS

AT noon of the second day the master of ceremonies, last dancer at the sun-pole, had broken away; all the initiates had been conducted or carried back to the lodge of preparation. Criers announced that these had finished and that each had borne himself as a man of valour and endurance. There was a thunderous boom, a bursting of drum-heads, and the sun dance was finished.

The assembly dispersed and the people returned to their several villages. On every hand there was praise of the young warrior, Catches Eagles, who had fulfilled his vow and his promise at initiation. He had danced from sun to sun, having fainted but twice when he had revived quickly as the mystery men threw water upon him.

The young man went to his lodge, slept profoundly for twenty-four hours and awoke to find himself as famous as his heart could have wished, but to discover that he had lost the one thing most desirable, the hope to possess Tokala for his wife.

People at the Oglala and Absaroke villages

had quickly learned that the daughter of Yellow-Iron was about to become the wife of Cloud Chief. Among the Oglalas there was much satisfaction and many of the Crows rejoiced in the prospect of this event.

"Now," these said, "we will make a peace with the Oglalas, who have been our most powerful enemies. There will be no fighting between us hereafter, for our clans will have intermingled their blood. We shall stand together against our enemies."

In the meantime the master of ceremonies had awakened and sat in his lodge eating meat. His mother told him, to his intense delight, what the people were saying of himself and then suddenly poured the gall of spirit into his wounds of the flesh.

"While you were dancing and fulfilling your vow," she said, "another has been courting Tokala Noni. It is now known that the daughter of Yellow-Iron will go to the north as the wife of Cloud Chief. You should have done as I advised. Lo, there are many young women in the clan of Yellow-Iron. There are four in the lodge of Whirlwind Soldier and you may marry the eldest of these and the others in succession; thus you will become powerful through your kinsmen."

To this Catches Eagles answered nothing. He

was stunned for the moment at the calamity which had fallen. For three winters he had looked upon Tokala as the one desirable woman. The daughter of Yellow-Iron had seemed set apart and aloof from all suitors. She was only to be won by a man whose wotawé should bring him extraordinary success. He had of late—despite some repulses from the proud girl—had no doubt that he was to be the fortunate man.

He had not thought of the chief of the Crows as a rival, having been too busy in his office as marshal of the sun dance, and in his personal preparation for its ceremonies, to keep pace with the news of the big camp. It had not come to his ears that a warrior of the Cheyennes was seeking Tokala and his own proposal had been prompted only when all things had seemed propitious for success.

Naturally Catches Eagles was possessed of the spirit of intrigue. An exterior of a stoic concealed the ambitious wiles of a politician. His success in managing a big meeting, and especially in securing the execution of a dance of the strong men upon the lines which he had laid down, was remarkable.

He had, in fact, had reason to hope, when all his plans had carried, that he would be a favoured suitor at the lodge of Yellow-Iron. When it was fixed in his mind that the chief of a visiting tribe—numbered,

too, among enemies of the Dakotas—was to carry off the prize his bitterness of soul was boundless. It was not a visible rage which possessed him, but the deep, fierce resistance of a passionate soul in arms against the dealing of fate. His labours at the sun dance and the pains he had borne had been Herculean in their nature. The fever of his wounds was rioting in his blood and, in the fierceness of disappointment, now set his brain on fire.

For a time, while the booming of drums announced the renewal of village fêtes, he sat with face in his hands. One after another schemes of revenge against the chief of the Crows chased each other through his hot brain. Kill him? He wanted but the opportunity to sheathe his knife in the body and bury his hatchet in the brain of the apostate enemy. He sat brooding, until sitting could no longer be endured, and then arose, concealed a knife and bow and arrows beneath the blanket which he threw over his shoulders, and passed beyond the range of camp lights. As upon a former occasion, when he had gone forth from his mother's teepee, a weak and aimless youth, phrases hummed through his brain and were repeated on his lips.

"He shall die! he shall die! he shall die! the flower of the Oglalas shall never enter his lodge!"

This was the burden of his thought and of his mut-

tered utterance as he strode swiftly forth from the Sans Arc village and made his way to solitude among the sand-hills.

He had no purpose for the moment save to be alone, and he strode on with long swinging steps hurrying away from the irritating noises of chant and drum.

He was no longer a youth but a man, transformed by a supreme success followed by a supreme disappointment. Wimima, with an edge beginning to fray, had mounted to the height of a hand when the fierce warrior entered the sand-hills. He was distant ten bow shots from the outskirts of the villages, and nearing the shadows of Bear Butte, when a figure of ghostly outline dawned upon his blurred vision. It was that of a woman or a girl slipping swiftly away in his front. In his right mind, the Sans Arc would have respected the wish of this female for solitude. But he was not in a mood to respect anybody's wish for anything and he swiftly followed the girl until he could grasp her by an arm.

"Who are you?" he demanded roughly, but not until he had seen before him, turned at bay, the face of a young girl whose look of affright and appeal could not, even by moonlight, have been mistaken.

The girl spoke in a weak voice and in the dialect of an Absaroka. "Let me go; I wish to be alone.

I wish to talk with no one." The tongue of the Crow and of the Dakota were once the same and Catches Eagles' grandmother had been a captive taken from an Absaroka village. He understood the girl quite perfectly and answered in her tongue. "You shall not go until you tell me why you are here. This is no place for a young girl—without the circle of the villages. I am master of ceremonies and you shall tell me why you have come thus far alone."

Releasing his captive he stepped back a pace or two. At his words the girl—she was almost a child—lost her fear. The great master of ceremonies would surely harm no maiden of his villages. With confidence restored she seated herself upon the grass. "I wish to be alone," she repeated half sullenly, half deprecatingly, yet with an accent and a manner which did not forbid the great man's repeated inquiry.

"Tell me who you are," Catches Eagles commanded.

The girl hesitated, pulling at the lush grass beside her. Then she spoke.

"I am Wings of Morning," she said, "daughter of Touch-the-Sky of the Absaroke. I came away from the villages because I was tired of the dancing and the drums. I wish to think about my own people. I long to go back among them for I am sick of this tiresome place."

"And why?" persisted the master of ceremonies speaking kindly, yet with guile. He dropped upon the grass confronting her and sat, at ease, his teeth gleaming in an encouraging smile.

"Because I hate this place," she said vehemently, and then caught her breath and fell to sobbing.

Catches Eagles waited for her emotion to pass. Then he spoke benevolently.

"My daughter," he said, "nothing which happens at the sun dance can be hidden from me. My tunkan (mystery god) tells me all things. I know why you are thus wandering alone. One whom you had hoped to marry has found a maiden among the strangers. She has bewitched him and an evil spirit has sung in his ear. Tell me if this be not true." There was enough of truth, in his power of divination, to astonish the maiden.

"It is true," she answered, quite off her guard, "that our great chief is to marry a Dakota maiden but I do not think that he has listened to evil council. He is my brother-in-law; I know him well; he is a good and great man."

She had said enough to furnish her wily interlocutor with the cue to important revelation. His blood again rioted, but this time in the sudden triumph of hope. The "great chief" of the Crows! This could be none other than Cloud Chief, and he the girl's

brother-in-law! So the successful rival was already married. Did Yellow-Iron—did Tokala know this? He believed not. Ha! the Absaroke had been very cunning! Tokala Noni was not one to become second wife to a foreign chief.

After the first flush of exultation he considered the matter gravely and replied to the Crow girl.

"Since Cloud Chief is your brother-in-law," he said, "and is married to your elder sister, you had expected also to marry him?"

The girl hung her head and her silence gave him all the assurance he could have asked. He sprang lithely to his feet.

"Be of good heart, my daughter;" he said, "return to your mother's teepee and sleep soundly. There are many young men as handsome and as brave as this brother-in-law of yours."

* * * * * *

The seat of attraction, on the night following the sun dance, was near the Cheyenne village, and was something in the nature of a stage play. Since the dance of the strong men there had been developed a feeling of rivalry. But few of the very famous old men had been heard at that meeting. Others desired to talk, to tell of their deeds and incidentally to raise a war spirit among the youth.

The time had come in the opinion of the wise ones when combined resistance could be made against the enemies of all Indians. These old chiefs and warriors had been able to see—at least all who had visited the settlements—that the white man is a fixed inhabitant, that he measures a piece of land which becomes his own and builds his teepee permanently, that the whole area of the earth is thus occupied and that only a fenced trail is left to those who require freedom of the woods and prairies. Now that these white ones were at war with each other, perhaps the time had come to check their encroachments and to turn them back indefinitely.

Debating these things an inter-tribal council had decided upon a meeting of the old men and warriors at the Cheyenne village. Hither by criers—for the authority of the master of ceremonies was no longer recognized—they had invited the people to assemble. An area of many yards in diameter brilliantly lighted was, in response, surrounded by a big concourse of people. These had come desiring to hear the gray old veterans of the plains tell of their fightings and their triumphs in the past.

No man of less than sixty winters was heard at this meeting. Each speaker in turn, arrayed in his finest war-dress, walked into the middle of the lighted area where he slowly trod to and fro facing probably

the largest audience which had ever listened to his voice.

After a proud march he began slowly and impressively to tell his story. He spoke in his own tongue, but with many interpreters. Each tribe of those assembled had its section in the circle. Confronting each tribal group stood an interpreter, who understood the language of the orator and of his immediate audience, and who rendered phrase by phrase the speech of the moment.

The occasion was inspiring, and those present were uplifted at the recitals of men who had long been honoured in their tribes.

As at the dances the members of allied families were here and there thrown together. In the Oglala section the clan of Yellow-Iron were grouped and Cloud Chief, accepted suitor of Tokala, was sitting with them. The young man had possibly never shown to better advantage. Modestly reclining upon his robe he gave strict attention to the recitals of his elders. He seemed not to allow his interest in the maiden who sat near at hand to interrupt his hearing. His hand-clap and his shout of approval, with that of many others, followed the boom of the drum when some brave and notable deed had been recounted.

Tokala had never been so proud of her lover, whose flushed cheeks and shining eyes betrayed his

deep and enthusiastic interest in the stirring recitals of his elders. So passed some happy and interesting hours. Then an intruding presence was thrust upon her clan group.

Coming in from the outer circle, winding his way among the sitters, the recent master of ceremonies dropped upon the ground within a pace of Tokala Noni. He sat facing Cloud Chief and within easy speaking distance. Covert glances of surprise passed between the women of the family; for the attitude and bearing of Catches Eagles seemed of uncommon assurance. But they said nothing. They were too courteous to give evidence that an unwelcome addition had been made to their circle.

The group sat outwardly unmoved while Catches Eagles, at intervals in the speeches, offered comment to those next his elbow.

It was after Touch-the-Sky, an old warrior of the Absaroke, had paced the area with stately tread, telling of his fights against the men who had come into his country seeking for gold, and had acquitted himself to the satisfaction of the audience, that Catches Eagles spoke to Cloud Chief.

"Your father-in-law," he said, "has been indeed a brave soldier, and he has much reason to feel proud of the chief who has married his eldest daughter."

The voice was that of flattering approval. But the

words were succeeded by a silence that was well nigh audible. Tokala only caught her breath in a quick gasp and looked doubtingly from one to the other of the young chiefs. Cloud Chief turned his face toward her, gazing for a moment into her truthful eyes. In the pale face and startled look he read her surprise and dismay, and he said quietly and calmly:

"The man is my father-in-law and he is a brave and good man."

Then his gaze met that of Catches Eagles. In the gleam of triumph and of venom which he saw there he read the object of this intrusion into a family circle. Instantly his eyes were alight with fierce hostility and the hand of either sought his knife-hilt. A fight was imminent, but sober second thought came in time and with a slight hiss of contempt Cloud Chief sank upon his elbow and lay at ease again.

Tokala quietly arose, drew her blanket close about her face and shoulders, passed out of the crowd and went to the solitude of an empty lodge.

XVIII

A BROKEN TRUCE

THE Oglalas were trailing down a fork of the Good Water river following an old buffalo path which skirted breaks and foothills and which had been picked with that instinct which makes for easy travel among the wild. For reasons which have been told those going to and returning from a sun dance moved without the usual outlook for enemies. The going was a gala occasion.

Danger of surprise by a war party or of a stampede from pony stealers was hardly conceivable to the Oglalas. All enemies who dared to invade the country of the Dakota had sent delegations to the sun dance and its truce was sacred to all the moons of good grass.

It was now the season of berries and women and children wandered freely among the timbered coulées, catching up with the slow moving cavalcade by an occasional scamper on their ponies.

Tokala and The Sky were of those who fell behind the movers, and they were picking red raspberries, which on the Good Water were famous for size and

flavour. At the mouth of a coulée they had busied themselves till the train had gone far past and there were no longer sounds of loiterers. In course of time The Sky remembered the necessity of preparing for her good man's midday meal.

"Come, daughter," she said, "let us be going. Our people must be far ahead and you know we have to make a boiling for dinner."

"Do you go on, Ina;" replied the girl, "I will come soon. You know how swift is my Spotted Fox—he will catch you quickly. You are much more dexterous than I, Ina; my basket is not near full yet."

At this The Sky lifted Ota into her travois and, with a full basket, mounted and rode away.

Tokala had nearly filled her measure when her eye, wandering to the open valley and a fringe of timber along the stream, caught the startled upward flight of a number of crows which she had heard cawing for some time. The flock rose and scattered, squalling and flapping after the ridiculous fashion of crows. Following them with her eye she saw plainly that a rookery of young birds, just beginning to fly, had been routed by an intruder.

"Some of our boys have attacked the birds with arrows," she thought; yet a vague feeling of uneasiness caused her to mount and take the trail. When she came out upon the level valley she looked ahead

and to right, left and rear, to note if any of the Oglalas were in sight. No person was to be seen. Even the dust-cloud which hovered continually in rear of the long train had vanished. Her people were far ahead and her feeling of uneasiness increased. The thought occurred to her that men did not hunt crows and that small boys were not likely to be hunting so far in the rear of the train. She wished that she had gone out of the coulée up on to the prairie and so for a time had kept out of sight of the valley.

Those mysterious forces which stir the intelligence of wild things were crowding upon her brain, else the emotion of fear could scarcely have followed the flight of a flock of squalling crows. A wild-cat, a porcupine, a tree snake or a hovering eagle might have caused their scattering. Yet as Tokala rode swiftly forward her eyes were upon the fringes of bush and tree which followed the slow windings of a channel which, at that season, had but a runlet of water rippling among its bars. And she scarcely felt surprise, though greatly increased alarm, when, at five or six bow-shots in her front, three horsemen rode out of the river's bed and immediately galloped toward the trail.

That these riders were strangers, in position to cut her off from her people, a second glance told her

perfectly. Apparently they were unaware of her approach but there was that in their bearing which warned her to keep at a distance. She turned abruptly away from the trail and rode toward the river. Her eye had noted a sweep of the valley to northward and this level stretch would offer the shortest and easiest run in overtaking her people. If chase were to be made her instinct was now to trust solely to the speed of her pony rather than to dodging among hills.

And the need for action was immediate. She had ridden but a little way when the strangers wheeled and came straight toward her, the foremost holding up his hand in token of wishing to make an inquiry. Tokala was not caught by the artifice. She gave her pony the quirt, thus openly declaring her suspicion. Seeing that finesse was in vain the horsemen threw away pretense, turned and dashed also straight for the river. They gave chase parallel to the course Tokala rode, and the girl understood their cunning purpose. If they might not overtake her at once they would, to the last moment, keep her going further from the chance of rescue.

There was, too, no further doubt in her mind of the purpose of these men. When the foremost had come within two bow-shots Tokala recognized Little Hand, son of the Crow chief Iron Face; and she

saw in him the emissary of Cloud Chief. During the long march from Bear Buttes he and his followers had hovered in the rear of the Oglalas watching for such opportunity as her loitering had furnished. So, the great chief of the Crows could not rest upon her flat refusal to become a second wife but must needs sends his young men to capture and compel submission! Fear vanished, followed by a dogged determination to escape at all hazards.

Her Spotted Fox was one of the swiftest of Oglala ponies and had won many wagers for the chief her father. The Fox must save her from these violators of a sacred truce. His flight to the river was like arrow from the bow, yet the Crows kept so nearly even chase that a long race was inevitable. Fleet-footed were the mountain horses sent to take her! She had clung to her basket of berries unthinkingly but dropped it on a gravel bar as, in half-a-dozen leaps, her pony crossed the channel of the river.

When she saw her pursuers mount the bank evenly above she wished that she had taken to the hills in her rear. But it was now too late. She must simply watch those Crows as the fleeing bird eyes a hawk in pursuit. If her pony should prove less swift or of less endurance than theirs she would be lost. When she had reached a high plain above the

river valley the Crows, cunningly strung out to prevent a dodging rush to rearward, were still racing her at even speed.

In her front loomed the Hills of Moving Waters, a stretch of semi-mountainous heights covered with black pines, a sacred country wherein no Dakota carried his war-weapons nor ever struck at the animals or birds. Many of those hills [1] had never been trodden by the foot of man. Because of their mysterious flows of hot and medicinal waters, gifts, direct and tangible, from the Great Mystery, all Indians were reverent of the ground. They only visited its healing springs to drink of the waters and to make offerings to the Most Mysterious.

Could she reach the sacred hills and gain the shelter of their pines Tokala felt that the chances of escape would be much improved. Even should the Crows disregard sacred ground of the Wakan Tanka, as they had the truce of the sun dance, she

[1] These mountains were what we now know as the Black Hills of Dakota. The Indian tribes surrounding them held all the country within their boundaries as sacred or mysterious ground and they neither hunted nor camped therein. The writer was one of the first to reach these hills after the incomplete exploration of General Custer in 1874. Nowhere in months of camping and tramping did I find any evidence of Indian trails, villages or burial places. And the permanent animals and birds, as the bear, the cougar, the black-tail deer, pine hen and others were absolutely unsophisticated in the ways of men. They were almost without fear, and the first hunters of the region found them absurdly easy of approach.

would yet, if she might get beyond their sight, have the deep shelter of the pines in which to hide. Once in the woods she could abandon her pony and then—she was as fleet as a young warrior and lighter of foot. There would be no trail which these men could follow with any hope of success. And in a few hours many horsemen of the Oglalas would be out looking for her.

She had no blanket, nothing to throw away. The Fox was only encumbered by her lightly dressed weight and the little, flat saddle which Indian women use. She carefully estimated the distance to the hills and the time it would take her to reach the shelter of their rocks and pines. The sun lacked a hand of the midday mark and before that time she would surely enter upon the sacred ground. Another survey of her pursuers assured her that they were no nearer than at the start. It was a wily race they were making, keeping only between herself and the trail of the Oglalas and trusting to wear out her pony or to force her upon some barrier which must bring her within their reach.

She leaned forward upon the neck of her pony, putting her hands on either side of the sleek withers. "O Spotted Fox," she prayed, "you are very swift, but there are those in pursuit also exceedingly fleet. Be wary—do not stumble. Be strong of heart and

limb to save me. Let me not be taken away from my people."

As though in answer to her petition the Spotted Fox tossed his head and snorted, "B-r-r-r-m-m-m!"

"My Fox!" cried Tokala, "you will be swift! Your feet shall be as the wings of the eagle to bear me away from the enemy. I shall not dwell in a teepee of the hated Crows—your speed shall overcome!"

There were probably seven miles between the runners and the long black range of hills, and so evenly mated were the horses of pursued and pursuer that the distance was nearly covered without perceptible alteration in their positions. Doubtless a half-hour would have measured the time of the race.

The Crows, bent upon capturing the girl unharmed, were content for a time to chase her further and further away from possible chance of rescue. Ere long they doubted not the prize would fall into their hands. When nearing the foot-hills of the sacred country they awakened to the danger of letting their quarry get among the dense pine forests looming ahead. And so, cunningly, and by what was intended to be imperceptible degrees, they began to bear in toward the fleeing one.

But Tokala was keenly on the watch for this move and, at the first appearance of approach, she

turned her horse's head and fled diagonally nearly straight away from them. And now the maiden bent forward, gently using the quirt, and spoke again and sharply in the ear of the Spotted Fox.

"My horse!" she urged in quick, magnetic tones. "My Fox, my swift footed one! Now! Now! Go! Go! RUN! RUN! RUN!"

And as though a very god of speed had infused his spirit into the cayuse the spotted one responded. He thrust forward his muzzle and stretched his length, even as a rabbit does, along the ground. And Tokala, assured that he would do his best, lay low upon his withers only shouting encouragement. The response was nothing less than splendid. Though he had covered at a swift gallop a distance that would have done to the ground a stable-bred animal he had by no means taxed his endurance.

Had not those behind been mounted upon the speediest and toughest of mountain ponies the chase would now have left them hopelessly behind. But the three in pursuit were among the pick of ten thousand Crow ponies and they did not fail in response to the quirt, cruelly plied by their yelling riders. These had pursued a waiting policy but now the quarry led straight away and their racing blood was roused.

The foot-hills rang with yells—hilarious and as-

sured of victory. Around the points of the hills they swept as hounds in chase of a fox. Three young warriors, intent upon doing service for their powerful chieftain, whipped their swift ponies to the topmost effort of speed.

Tokala, leaning upon her pony's neck, kept an eye alternately upon the rear and front. She hugged the foot-hills ever closer and at length, seeing that the Crows were not gaining, dodged in at the mouth of a coulée. Along the bottom of a dry run her pony, vying with the red deer, carried her into the fastnesses. Up and up they mounted into the region of pines.

The cañon deepened as she advanced and branched on either hand into a net-work of gorges, at the bottom of which were the sand-beds of torrents which ran in the seasons of rain. Logs, floodwood, stones, barred the way but her panting pony took them like the mountain goat leaping, scrambling and climbing but never losing his feet.

Up and up they went winning to the crests of the pine-topped hills. At length Tokala was able to halt a trembling, dripping horse upon the crest of a ridge. Here she sat listening intently for some seconds. The heavy breathing of her horse and the rustle of the pines were the only sounds that came to her ears. She was filled with elation at this cer-

tain evidence that the chase, somewhere below, had gone astray.

She was content to rest only for the brief time necessary to breathe her horse and again set forward. Riding at a walk she picked her trail along the stony crests and scarps of ridges where only minute inspection could have discovered her pony's hoof-prints.

She was very loath to abandon her horse as had been her plan if closely pressed. It seemed now that there would be no need. To get between the enemy and the trail of her people, with a rested animal, was her object. If she might get but a little start of the Crows and with a clear run to the camp of the Oglalas she would have but little doubt of the outcome.

The covered ridge, which she had last mounted, seemed to run in the right direction and she followed for a long way in close cover of drooping pines. She travelled for so great a distance, hearing nothing of the Crows, that it seemed impossible they should ever come up with her. For they would need to dismount and follow slowly the tracks of her pony, if indeed they would be able to follow them at all.

For a further time she kept on, shifting her course from one rock crown to another. Then she came upon a plateau where tall pines alternated with green openings, where the earth was of brilliant red paint

and where tall grasses and purple and yellow flowers grew in profusion. Never had Tokala seen a spot so beautiful. Her fears were well nigh forgotten, caution as to blinding her trail quite laid aside, as she rode among the whispering pines or out upon the grass plats where flowers seemed to turn their faces up to greet her. She began to note also that birds sat upon the limbs of trees or hopped in the grass almost within arm's reach as she passed. Presently she paused to listen again. As before there were no sounds of those in chase. She dismounted to allow her horse to rest, while her ears should be on the alert.

She dropped the pony's bridle over his head and wandered to a little distance, admiring flowers which she had no thought of picking. She had never cared for flowers in the hand; they died so quickly, thus losing all their beauty. Presently, as she passed leisurely under the outermost boughs of a pine, a large bird startled her by whirring down from the tree-tops and alighting at her feet. It was Siyo Wazi the pine grouse and he strutted at her feet absolutely unafraid.

"K-r-r-o-o-o-krroo—kroo-eett!" said Siyo Wazi and he roughed his feathers and cocked an eye at her. He seemed wonderfully friendly and curious and Tokala was delighted with what seemed an ex-

hibition of affectionate interest. She was in some doubt whether it might be that her skirt of red trader's cloth had attracted the bird. And again she considered Siyo Wazi as wholly interested in herself and was happy in this belief.

"O Siyo Wazi!" she exclaimed, "do you truly wish to be my friend?" She stood still looking down at the bird which strutted, roughing its feathers and "krooing" within a pace of her. "Is it that you have a warning to utter or do you inform me of a peace?"

Suddenly as she gazed upon the bird there came over her the conviction that indeed this was the Sacred Country, and that no harm could come to her within the confines of these silent pine-hills. This was why she had heard no sound of the enemy! When she had gained the shelter of the Mini-skan-skan the Crows had not dared to follow her. So it was that she might rove at will among the sacred pines. A great peace filled her soul.

As if to confirm what Siyo Wazi had told her there came out of the near-by covert a fawn which stood at gaze at the distance of five steps, its head lifted, its nostrils slightly dilated, and its great dark eyes fixed upon the upright walker with infinite and innocent curiosity. It was a most beautiful creature, a yearling doe, which had met with few alarms and

knew not the wickedness of the eaters of flesh. Very possibly no image of fear had ever been projected into its consciousness and so it stood, and finally approached, gently sniffing the air and tossing its head in a coquettish fashion. The little doe came on until Tokala, as in a delightful dream, softly put forth her hand and stroked the face of the innocent one.

At length the fawn, growing in confidence, rubbed against her and raised its head to be caressed and fondled. Tokala had met with no like experience and the influence of this primeval wilderness was strong upon her. She was now sure that the good spirits were hovering above and a calm security enveloped her soul. Even the Crows must respect the powers ruling here. These had left off pursuit at the edge of the Sacred Country.

After the fawn had left her, flashing away among the bush, she sat, for a long time, allowing her horse to crop the rich grasses. When certain that the Fox could travel without fatigue she mounted and rode in search of water.

This was found at the foot of a deep ravine and she again dismounted and turned her animal loose. It was after midday and Tokala, searching among the rich herbage, unearthed roots which were good to eat. Scaling near heights she found an abundance of red raspberries and, after enough of fruit,

stretched her tired body upon the pine needles and slept.

Her awakening was a rude one. Something—the odour of tobacco perhaps, aroused her. She lifted her eyes to see three young Indians seated about her in most friendly fashion.

Little Hand sat but two or three paces away smoking his pipe and looking at her most amicably. Her fears were lulled by this friendly attitude, yet she knew that she was irretrievably a prisoner, that the Crows had come upon her stealthily and had no thought of allowing her to escape.

She cast her eyes first upon one then the other of pleasant but unrelenting faces. Her captors were mere youths no older than herself. Their faces were open and honest and she felt no fear of them. Indeed the three had been her near neighbours during the summer.

At length she addressed Little Hand who apparently was the leader. Her tone was serious and reproving but gave no sign of the despair at her heart.

"Why have you broken the peace of the sun dance, and how dared you come into the Sacred Country seeking a captive?"

"You should remember," answered Little Hand, in the trade tongue which Tokala had used, "that you had promised to dwell with us in the teepee of our

great chief. We do no violation in seeking our own. It is the will of the Most Mysterious. If this be not enough, then your big man, Catches Eagles, who was chief of us all during the sun dance, counselled us to come after you and carry you to the Crow country, that no Dakota pledge should be broken. You know that we must all keep the promises made at such a time. I say again it is the will of the Most Mysterious."

And against this cunning yet truthful defense Tokala knew that argument would be too vain for thought. But some matters were swiftly revolved in her mind. That the great chief of the Crows should feel justification in sending his men to capture her she could admit. It might be that she had done wrong from his point of view, though not from her own. But Catches Eagles! She had no doubt that Little Hand had told her the truth and that the wily Sans Arc had counselled the performance of what had been done. But how could one so wise and great as Cloud Chief have been deceived by his own bitterest enemy?

There would be swift rescue and Catches Eagles, whom she loathed, would carry her back to the Oglalas and there set up a claim which, since her refusal to marry the Crow chief, had already been too well urged. Many of her relatives had declared that she

had now no reason to refuse one so well favoured of the Great Mystery. It was high time she were married, they said, and to longer humour her would be to foster a perverse and stubborn creature whom it were better to discipline in some rigorous manner. Tokala reached the swift conclusion that she would rather be carried into the Crow country than be recaptured by Catches Eagles or his followers. She preferred to make her escape unaided or to meet death in the attempt. Having revolved the matter she said to her captors:

"You are but young warriors and you do not know the wiles of that Sans Arc. He does not indeed intend that you shall carry me to your country but will be after you and catch up with you quickly. Your scalps will surely hang at his belt."

The youngsters laughed heartily. They were more than pleased at Tokala's evident reluctance to be retaken by Catches Eagles. Perhaps she had repented her action after the sun dance and was now glad that their great chief had taken such pains to show his preference. Indeed how could it be otherwise? So they laughed joyously.

"Do not fear for us," said Little Hand, "and do not think that your big Sans Arc is the shrewdest man in the world! If you do you will soon see that you have been mistaken. He has not deceived us

although we let him think so. He will not catch us. Are not the Absaroke ponies ever the swiftest?"

"You did not prove it in chasing me," said Tokala calmly, "nor could you ever have come up with my Spotted Fox but that I foolishly thought myself safe upon this sacred ground."

At this the young men's faces reddened, but they laughed it off and Little Hand brought forth from a parflêche some dried pemmican.

"Come," he said, "let us eat and be off."

XIX

IN CLOUD CHIEF'S LODGE

WHEN they reached the Crow village, after ten days of hard riding, the young men had made good their boast that the Sioux should not overtake them. Weary and sore from long and hard riding Tokala was set down at the teepee of Cloud Chief, where she was received in no very gracious manner by Mountain Lamb. This young woman threw open the tiyopa ungraciously and said to the weary wayfarer:

"Come in. I suppose that you are the Sioux girl whom my husband intends to take to wife."

Without answering Tokala stepped within the lodge. There was nothing else for her to do. A wearied glance showed her an apartment as luxurious and well appointed as an Indian woman could have wished. The lodge was large and well furnished, hung with many fine ornaments and its floor thickly laid with rugs and mats.

The girl stood for a moment, uncertain of what she ought to do and then, overcome by a sudden home-sickness, sank upon a bear-skin and buried her face

in her hands. She had borne well a long and tiresome journey, uncomplaining of the hard and strenuous march which had landed her in the teepee of the alien chief. That he was not at hand to greet her was a distinct relief; for she felt that she could not have borne his immediate appearance. Ignoring the presence of his wife she gave vent to her feelings and wept unrestrainedly.

Mountain Lamb, when she had recovered from her astonishment, sat down and looked at her, warming toward the stricken one, the while she amused a small child which seemed inclined to whimper in sympathy with the stranger.

It is simple truth to say Tokala's coming had been a complete surprise to the wife of Cloud Chief. Mountain Lamb had not heard of such a person until, briefly before the arrival, Little Hand had ridden to her teepee door to bid her make ready for a Sioux maiden—her husband's new wife. At first anger had taken possession of her and she had declared that no Dakota girl should be admitted to her lodge. Then, as she listened to the story of Tokala's capture, she no longer doubted that her husband—though he was now away on a buffalo hunt—had sent these young men to take the maiden; and curiosity, for the moment, overcame all other emotions.

If it were her husband's will to take another wife

it was but natural that he should do so in his own way. She had expected that some time so great and successful a chief would wish to add to his family in this way. But she had a sister, Wings of Morning, whom she had expected would take the place of second wife. For this event she had been quite prepared and would have welcomed the sister into her lodge. Wings of Morning was but young yet, having seen barely fourteen winters and perhaps yet the big chief, her husband, would take her to wife.

At any rate, as the first wife, Mountain Lamb considered that she was chief of the household. It would be her place to rule another wife and if it were a Sioux so much the more would she relish her authority. This captive girl should be her slave. She would be waited upon, she and her child. The Sioux wife should cut all the wood, bring the water, do the heavy work in cutting up the buffaloes and in fleshing and tanning skins.

On the whole, when she had fully considered the matter, she was not greatly displeased with this accession to her household. And when she finally realized that Tokala had not come to her chief willingly she warmed to her briefly with a genuine Indian woman's kindliness.

When the weary girl had sobbed out her grief, Mountain Lamb arose and went softly about pre-

paring a meal. She put meat in a kettle with water and sweet roots to make a palatable soup. She was a long time getting the meal, thus giving her enforced guest time to recover. Voice and action were kindly as she stopped before the prostrate girl and bade her get up and eat.

For a moment or two Tokala appeared not to hear and then her native courtesy asserted itself and she arose, having secretly wiped her eyes. She sat down at dinner with no comment whatever and the meal was finished in silence. A small one-year-old, tilted upon his cradle-board within easy reach, shared in the soup. It was after the kettle and dishes had been put away that silence was broken between the women.

Tokala had taken her seat in the rear of the lodge and had had time to take a survey of her surroundings. Had she come to this teepee to be its sole mistress or its first one she could not have asked for anything more. Evidently the great chief of the Crows was wealthy and his wife had everything in her lodge that one could wish, besides many things which were purely ornamental. There were bunks for the bedding, with fine saddles and blankets underneath, and there were numbers of curious utensils which were strange to the Sioux girl, and there were carved turtle-shell bows and brass pots and spoons as fine as any in her own country. She had never seen

such beautiful bear-skin rugs, nor woven-grass mats stained and coloured in so many brilliant hues.

The walls, too, were skirted with such material as delights a tasteful housewife. Beaded bags and parflêches, hanks of sinews, trader's cloth, thread and ribbons, strings of gay beads, besides numerous ornamental skins of small animals and wings of scarlet birds. All this would have given her happiness as mistress of a household; but these things had been provided for or by another and she could never have any delight in them.

Tokala was in momentary dread of the chief's coming. Her relief was very great when presently Mountain Lamb seated herself opposite, and, with some ornamental work in hand, made the casual remark:

"My husband is at the buffalo hunting. They have gone north of the Muddy River near to the Great Falls and I do not expect him to return for one moon yet and perhaps he may be gone two moons. It is said that the Black-feet are likely to be encountered. We indeed may never see those who have gone out again."

She said this calmly and dispassionately as though the loss of one's husband were a casual event to be taken with philosophy.

Tokala's heart bounded joyfully, not because of

the woman's apparent apathy toward her husband but because of the long respite to herself which Cloud Chief's absence promised. Evidently he had wished her to become wonted to her new home before he should thrust his unwelcome presence upon her. So much the more chance there would be of escape from a slave's life. Quickly in mind and soul were her moods adjusted to meet the needs of the occasion. It would be necessary to be cunning. She would appear to accept her position willingly and to be looking forward to the return of her prospective husband, and in the meantime, when she had convinced them all of her sincerity, she would slip out of this hated village and away to the mountains. She framed her first sentence to this end.

"Since our great chief is to be gone so long away," she said, "doubtless he provided a lodge for me also? He must know that I should have a teepee to myself. I know that you will bear with me for crying like a child when I was brought into your lodge for I was weary and had been brought a long way from my own people whom I never expect to see again."

The face of The Mountain Lamb grew cold and she studied the work in her hand intently for a moment; then she spoke:

"The great chief of the Absaroke," she said, "men-

tioned nothing to me about taking another wife. I did not know of you until Little Hand came to the lodge this morning."

Her reply surprised and elated Tokala and swiftly the girl recalled things which heretofore had not pressed upon her mind as significant. In various ways she had questioned her captors about Cloud Chief's intent, as to her immediate disposal on reaching the Crow village, and they had returned evasive answers. Was it possible that Cloud Chief was not responsible for her capture? The question filled her mind with growing conviction and delight. Why, Cloud Chief had never listened to the counsel of the Sans Arc! And could so wise a chief have trusted so important an errand to three mere boys? True these had succeeded—but, by the merest accident!

And now, away on the buffalo hunt when he should have been awaiting her! She had indeed been foolish to believe those youths. Cloud Chief's wife had evidently spoken the truth. She had known nothing of such intention on his part. The young men who had taken her had unquestionably done so by the suggestion of Catches Eagles and in the hope to please their great chief and gain a reward. As the evidence piled up in her mind Tokala's elation increased. Very quickly she was satisfied that both her former lover and herself were in false positions.

Even yet Cloud Chief might not wish her to dwell with him without her consent. This conclusion won for the Crow chief complete exoneration in Tokala's mind. Yet she swiftly concluded that she did not wish to wait in the village until his return. The temptation to retain her might prove too great. She was homesick for her people and she would get away at the earliest possible moment.

All this was swiftly revolved in her mind as she sat quietly studying the averted face of Mountain Lamb.

"Then there is no teepee for me?" she queried at length.

"I know of none," responded the Crow woman coldly.

The Sioux girl was on the wrong tack and she veered quickly. Her mind was occupied with the cunning, unreasoned motives of an Indian woman. She was among the enemy and she would do anything, be anything, which might not pollute the body, for the gaining of her purpose. So she changed her note.

"Since the great chief of the Crows," she said, "has not cared enough to build a lodge for a captured maiden, doubtless he will choose to send me home again, for I will not dwell in the teepee of another woman."

At this the face of Mountain Lamb lighted and her manner grew almost genial as she replied, "Doubtless my husband did not expect such very young warriors to succeed in their errand. They do not often accomplish much—such young fellows as Little Hand and the sons of Talking Bird. Very likely my husband will prepare a lodge for you when he returns."

Conversation was now interrupted by the appearance of a third party. The folds of the tiyopa were softly pushed aside and a young girl, whom Tokala well remembered at the sun dance, entered. Appearing to be much agitated the maiden came slowly forward. Her face was flushed and her eyes shone with a strange light, but she did not appear to be unfriendly. She dropped upon a mat presently, slightly behind Mountain Lamb, and looked so steadily in Tokala's face that the Sioux girl's eyes drooped before the intensity of her gaze. That this girl was sister to Mountain Lamb Tokala now knew perfectly, although she had not learned her name. The resemblance between the two was striking except that the young girl was much finer looking than her sister.

After some minutes of silence the newcomer spoke in her Crow tongue and the wife of Cloud Chief answered briefly and then to Tokala, using the

trade tongue and the sign language, which had enabled them to converse, she said:

"This is my sister, Wings of Morning, whom I had expected to dwell in my teepee."

The young girl blushed deeply at these words and made as if she would arise but the sister put out a hand and restrained her. "Stay," she said, "this is a Sioux girl whom my husband has sent for to dwell in my teepee. He should have told us about this but we must not lack in courtesy. I understand the Sioux does not come willingly but has been taken as a captive."

And it was then that the pent-up feelings of Wings of Morning found expression.

"Sister," she said eagerly, "I know this girl. She is Tokala Noni, daughter of the great Sioux chief, Yellow-Iron, and she would rather have died than come to our village to live. Is it not so?" she asked eagerly. And Tokala, the tears suddenly filling her eyes, could only nod assent. This genuine emotion softened what of hardness there was left in the heart of Mountain Lamb and she looked with great kindness and sympathy upon Tokala.

XX

WINGS OF MORNING

THE days passed heavily with Tokala. She took her place quietly and helpfully in the teepee of Mountain Lamb. When work was required she did it with seeming cheerfulness. There was not a great deal to do at this season, there being but three in the teepee. The hunter of the household had left his family provided with meat. Mountain Lamb seemed quite content that Tokala should bring wood and water and cook the meals. She spent much of her time gossiping and visiting with her neighbours and, for all her watchfulness, Tokala might have escaped time and again.

The position of the village was such, and the eyes of the dwellers were too keen, to permit the thought of escape in daylight—the only time Tokala was allowed outside the lodge. The Crow town had its teepees aligned upon the bank of a mountain stream skirted by fringes of timber and willows, which furnished some shelter and plenty of wood but no hiding-places. On either side of the river was a flat valley of grass-land extending for many bow-shots, as level as a teepee floor. And beyond loomed

great, barren heights upon whose near scarps one might note the progress of a rabbit. Plainly there was no possible chance of escape in daylight. Although, when she went to the willow patches for wood or to the river for water, Tokala was not made aware of open surveillance, she was, nevertheless, conscious that curious or suspicious eyes had followed her movements and that an attempt to cross the valley would simply betray her desire to escape.

So she possessed her soul in patience and trampled upon a homesick longing which would have betrayed her unrest. Mountain Lamb, while not actually unkind to her, discovered a growing coldness as the days passed and a desire to spend her time in other company than that of the Sioux girl. At times, when it seemed to Tokala that she was doing her best to please and to make herself useful, the wife of Cloud Chief would lay commands upon her, sharply ordering her to attend to other work, and then would take her child and go to the teepee of a neighbour.

Tokala was at a loss to account for these outbursts of petulancy which grew upon the mistress of the lodge and were so unlike her earlier behaviour. Yet wisdom soon came to her through her intimacy with Wings of Morning. Between Tokala and this young girl there was daily comradeship. Cloud

Chief's name was never mentioned between them. They were simply girl friends and Tokala, always of a youthful spirit, was not less girlish in her likings than the young Crow, who had developed wisdom quite beyond her years. Wings of Morning was a sort of foster-mother to numerous small boys and girls of her clan who called her "Aunt Wings."

Of a dozen or more tiny folk, nearly related to her, there was usually one to lay demand upon her spare moments, with a leaky doll to be stuffed and sewed up, a complete new mannikin of buckskin to be dressed; or there was a little warrior with a broken bow-string, an arrow with head to be painted in a wonderful fashion, or wanting a new whizzing-stick—always something for the clever Aunt Wings to do if she would. And seldom did a little one ask in vain.

Tokala found time to pass most happily when she could assist the youthful aunt in meeting such needs. She, also, was expert in making and mending the toys of children and like Aunt Wings had much to do of it at home. Tokala's dolls and doll-dresses were of the highest art of their kind. In a brief time this was discovered by the Crow youngsters. There was a clamour for new dolls and the friends shared in the pleasant labour of catering to the needs of naked and hilarious tots.

It was when she looked upon Tokala at this labour that Mountain Lamb seemed to grow tired of her teepee and, making some disagreeable remark, would take her own infant and go off for a half-day's gossip with neighbours. Tokala had, for half a moon, been an inmate of her teepee and had become a favourite, not only among little folk but with many of the grown people of the village, when Mountain Lamb flounced out of the lodge one morning in a particularly disagreeable mood. Tokala believed the woman would have beaten her had she dared and she was feeling wretchedly at her inability to please when Wings of Morning came in, her fresh and pretty face aglow with youth and good humour. Already Tokala had learned enough of Crow words to converse with her friend.

"I do not know," she said presently, "what I have done to displease your sister, but she is often angry with me of late. Tell me if you can what is the matter; for I wish to be her friend and to dwell here comfortably so long as I must stay."

The young girl had taken a seat and was at work for a small one who had come in clinging to her skirt. She sat in thoughtful silence for some minutes. "Run out now, Penana," she said to the child, "and come back after a while when I have finished your cradle-board."

"These little folk have such acute ears," she explained to Tokala, when the youngster had vanished. "Speaking of my sister I think she is merely foreseeing what will happen when her husband returns. You will be his favourite wife—every one says so—because you are of his own people and because he has always wanted to marry you and—because of other reasons. I think that is all."

Tokala thought that—if true—this was enough and, as there seemed nothing she could say to help the matter, she remained silent and the conversation shifted into less embarrassing channels. So, until the midday meal, the two talked and worked for small folk who trooped in upon them in relays and then, after the meal, Wings of Morning stayed on.

Mountain Lamb did not return until Wi, the sun, was low in the west. Then, as the day was very warm, she and Tokala sat outside of the lodge. Most of the teepees had their bottoms rolled up and people were lolling on their blankets or lazily gossiping. Mountain Lamb seemed in better humour than she had been for some days, though there was no apparent reason for the change of mood. Toward sunset, when it had grown somewhat cooler, the tattoo of a drum was heard and the folk roused and pricked their ears, supposing that some of the young men were about to start dancing.

Soon, however, it appeared that the drumming was at the teepee of their great mystery man High Bear. It ceased presently and the mystery man came forth and began to parade back and forth among the teepees, after the manner of his kind. Tokala had seen this Wakan man of the Crows many times, but never in such splendid array as he had donned for this occasion. He seemed not only to be proudly posing but engaged in performance of some rite of an occult nature.

As he strode to and fro he sang a chant in words of mysterious import which no one but himself understood and which, it was said, had been taught him by the Most Mysterious.

No one seemed to notice him at this peculiar exercise, as that was the etiquette of the occasion. Tokala noted that the great man passed frequently before the teepee of Cloud Chief. He was a tall and vigorous person, in the prime of life, erect and with the movement of a splendid animal. His shuffling stride reminded Tokala of Igmu-hanska, the long yellow cat of the mountains. The man was dressed resplendently, his trailing bonnet reaching to his heels, his leggings and shirt of yellow buckskin painted in the mystical figures of his craft. His face was unpainted but flushed with a glow of exultation, and his eyes shone with a strange light.

Until night fell High Bear paced to and fro along the river's bank passing continually before the lodge where sat Tokala and Mountain Lamb. He continued his strange chant, no word of which seemed to be directed to any living creature. Mountain Lamb apparently paid the man no heed, but as often as he passed seemed to be looking away into the distance. Tokala supposed that the mystery worker was perhaps paying a compliment to the war-chief of the Crows in thus marching and chanting before his teepee.

After a time Mountain Lamb arose quite suddenly and went within the lodge. Tokala followed and the evening meal was cooked and eaten in silence. On the following morning Mountain Lamb seemed to have undergone a change toward her captive guest. She spoke pleasantly when at all and, when Wings of Morning came and again there was work to do for small people, she made no unkind remarks but sat looking on with much interest while Tokala manufactured of a piece of buckskin, some deer's hair, beads and thread, a Sioux doll which had more the shape of a real baby than the ordinary one of Crow make.

During the day there was no jar in the household, though Mountain Lamb was uncommonly silent and thoughtful. When night came they sat outside the

teepee as usual and High Bear, again in fine dress, began to walk to and fro before the teepee. Tokala had never known this to happen twice in succession among her own people except as a man desired to attract attention of some girl or woman whom he wished to marry. As she was the one unmarried inmate of the lodge she began to feel some embarrassment.

This was quickly dispelled when, upon a furtive study of the face of Cloud Chief's wife, in which she sought to read interpretation of the man's acts, she saw that which filled her soul with greater shame than if she herself had been openly courted.

The man, in passing, looked with a bold and evil eye straight into the face of Mountain Lamb and Tokala saw that young woman's eyes drawn to his and her face suffused with colour. The Sioux girl immediately arose and went inside the lodge.

XXI

AN EVIL WOOING

DAYS passed and High Bear seemed to have cast an evil spell over the people of the village. His bold courtship of the wife of their chief went on shamelessly before their eyes. On each evening at the going down of the sun the man, in his finest array, displayed himself before the lodge of Mountain Lamb. She did not sit outside especially to encourage his acts but the weather was warm, the tiyopa open, or the covers were rolled up to admit of air, and the woman was well aware of the attentions of her former suitor. She might readily have closed her teepee or have slipped away to a neighbour's on his appearance. That she did not do so was to the bitter shame of Tokala.

On several occasions Wings of Morning was sitting in the open lodge but arose and went out hastily at the first appearance of High Bear. Many of the near neighbours of Mountain Lamb also would wander away from their teepees so as to appear not to notice this bold courting of the wife of one whom they honoured. Not so with Mandan Woman,

mother of Mountain Lamb. When she saw how matters were going she made it a point to appear at her daughter's lodge, whenever the mystery man began his parade, and she immediately sought to engage her daughter in conversation. She was usually unsuccessful. Mountain Lamb would answer in monosyllables or not at all, seeming to be absorbed in thought, while now and then her eyes were drawn irresistibly to the passing figure of the mystery man. It was wholly outside the province or duty of an Indian mother to warn her daughter so long as the latter committed no overt act in answer to the lure thrown out to her. To have done so would have been to forfeit the daughter's respect and allegiance.

"The mystery man has cast an evil spell over the wife of Cloud Chief." This was the unspoken thought of the mother, Tokala and many others. But no one dared to make these thoughts known even to his or her closest friend. Such is the moral code of the Indian. Suspicion may be uttered against those in authority only at one's peril.

If the man had not been very cunning, if he had committed any open indiscretion, had left a present of value before her teepee or had spoken enticing words, the spell would have been broken. But the powers he exercised were exactly those of the mesmerist or hypnotist the world over. The same

powers, so abundantly possessed by certain Indians, enabled the strong and magnetic among them to inaugurate the ghost dance, to induce trances and strange visions among their followers. With an emotional people, undisciplined in mind, there is little defense against the tremendous force of such personalities.

Thus the mother, sister and friends of the woman were compelled to maintain impotent silence while the daring wooer wove his spell. That all must end in tragedy or in a tribal division was feared by the wiser ones and gloom settled upon the village. It was like a time when clouds of strange shape and colours had hung over them—things of evil portent which had scared them inside their teepees and put to rout, for many suns, all the gaieties of the season.

Sudden relief from suspense came with a courier from Cloud Chief who was but two or three suns in advance of the hunting party. This man, announced in a crier's voice, riding the length of the town, that the buffalo hunters had been very successful and were bringing in their pack animals loaded with meats and robes. Instantly all things, save this joyful news, were forgotten. Immediately men and women went out for their ponies and before night fell more than half the folk had set out to meet the hunters.

By sunset the teepees seemed well nigh empty.

To Tokala a crisis had come. She felt that now, if ever, she must escape and she had rejoiced to see each party of horsemen, each loaded travois of women and children, set out. She had seen her horse, Spotted Fox, brought in by a woman and then, for some reason, after the pony had been partly packed, its saddle was stripped off and placed upon another animal and the Fox turned loose. A slight lameness of one hind foot appeared to be the cause of the pony's release—though that would hardly have counted had there not been an abundance of ponies at the village. Tokala rejoiced in the fact that the Fox had not been taken. If she might once gain the open country upon his back she would quickly put herself beyond reach of pursuit.

All else but the furtive thought and hope of escape had gone out of her mind when, just before the setting of the sun, she saw High Bear again walking before the teepee. Mountain Lamb was within, apparently deeply engaged in sewing ornaments upon a skirt of trader's cloth. That she had not gone out to meet her husband was not to be wondered at. Her child, nearly old enough to walk, was a burden which any but the stoutest of Indian mothers might have shrunk from carrying upon such a journey.

"But now," Tokala thought, seeing that the lodge was closed except for a slight fringe of the tiyopa,

"now the woman has remembered her husband and her duty to him. The mystery worker cannot longer control her mind." And the ingenuous girl truly rejoiced in this belief. She was, however, quickly undeceived. She had cooked a pot of roots and dried meat just as darkness came on. Preparing a dish of this she set it before Mountain Lamb. That young woman arose, paying her not the slightest heed, carefully changed the skirt she wore for the one she had been ornamenting; then combed and anointed her hair and put on the various ornaments with which an Indian woman loves to decorate her person. Then, to the astonishment and dismay of Tokala, she turned to her and calmly said:

"I am now going out to dwell in the teepee of another. I leave this child to you and your husband. It is Cloud Chief's child and I do not care to bother with it further. I want nothing that is his nor anything further to do with him."

With that the bewitched woman walked out of the lodge and stood in the path of High Bear who was yet parading before her teepee. Tokala could scarce believe her senses. Fascinated and fearful she looked out at the tiyopa to see the medicine man advance, with a proud and proprietary air, take the woman by the hand and lead her away to his lodge.

In sheer dismay the Sioux girl sat upon a rug

and took the abandoned infant in her arms. It was Cloud Chief's child and for that reason, if no other, she had come to love the little one which she had thought plainly resembled him. How long she sat rocking the child to and fro, mourning over the heartlessness of its mother, she never knew. She had lost all consciousness of her recent determination to escape when Wings of Morning came into the teepee and flung herself upon her face on the floor. It was plain that the girl had seen and understood what had happened and Tokala said nothing to interrupt her paroxysm of grief.

Presently the girl ceased her sobbing and sat up. She stooped over the teepee's fire-hole, filled her hollowed hands with ashes and flung the dust upon her head.

"My sister is dead," she said, "and thus I mourn for her."

"No, she is not dead;" said Tokala sadly, "that evil man has cast a spell upon her. I think truly that she is not at fault. It is because those wicked young men broke the peace of the sun dance, that all this has happened. They should never have brought me here."

"Do you truly think then that no one is to blame?" asked the girl eagerly.

"Truly I do;" said Tokala, "no one but those bad

young men and this evil mystery man who has taken advantage of your sister's grief at my coming."

At this point their conversation was interrupted by the coming of Mandan Woman. There was no fire in the teepee and the woman stood hesitatingly for a moment until her eyes had adjusted themselves to the dim light. Then she snatched the child from Tokala's arms and bore it to her lodge. And somehow this rude act lifted a great weight from the Sioux girl's heart. Mandan Woman had seldom spoken to her, regarding her as a usurper in her daughter's household. But her present act showed to Tokala that there were women of virtue among these people and so comforted her. The child would be properly cared for by its grandmother.

Wings of Morning lingered in the teepee for a while; then getting only monosyllables from Tokala in her attempts at conversation she arose, greatly to the relief of the Sioux girl who feared that she might choose to stay all night. It grieved Tokala to thus part with her young friend but there was no other way. Upon being left alone she sat listening until all sounds of the teepee dwellers had ceased; then she bestirred herself. She took enough of pemmican to last her for ten suns, bestowed it in a parflêche, selected a small woman's saddle and a bridle from the several which the lodge contained, and went

forth walking among the teepees in a confident and unconcerned manner. She had put on a blanket, after the fashion of a man, and she took the swinging stride of a young brave walking boldly past the nearer lodges and so on out upon the open ground.

All was still in the village. Most of the dogs had, scenting a full feed at the hunter's camp, followed the travoix of the women. A half-moon looked down upon the somnolent teepees and a light breeze rustled the leaves of the cotton-woods. The sky was free of clouds and the near mountains loomed, in clear cut outlines, so close that they seemed to invite one to a sudden scramble into the shelter of their fastnesses. Yet there was no cause for haste or fear. The village rested in quiescence, herself quite forgotten in the recent excitements, the people secure from attack because of reports of their hunter scouts that no enemies had been seen.

As she searched for the Spotted Fox Tokala rejoiced in the guile which had led people to suppose that she willingly waited the coming of their chief. The young men had all gone out to meet the hunters and Tokala was not once challenged while she wandered among the pony herds. Her escape was easy and void of any except inward excitement. She found her pony at last by gently calling and located him by his answering nicker of inquiry. Two or

three soft calls, as she approached, fetched the animal to her and, like a faithful dog, the Fox stood to be caressed by his mistress. He had been a young colt of the number which the Brulé had given to her father and for three years had been Tokala's riding pony.

Having done all with boldness the girl adjusted saddle, bridle and trappings and galloped out of the village.

XXII

TOKALA'S LONE TRAIL

BEFORE morning Tokala had passed behind a chain of mountains which sheltered the Crow village and out upon the open plain. When daylight came she cast anxious glances over a long, clear stretch to rearward fearful of any sign of movement. Though she kept an eye to the rear, noon came and she had seen nothing more formidable than the numerous antelope. Often one of these would scurry to a near height there to wheel and launch at her shrill snorts of defiance. These small animals seemed indeed at times to entice her to a trial of speed. When one bolder than its fellows stood at a little distance, stamping its feet and whistling saucily at her, she addressed the animal after her kind.

"Ho, Negasan," she said, "I know that you are swifter now than my Spotted Fox; but if he were fresh and not lame in one foot I would teach you that you are really a silly fellow. Do not stand there longer and boast for I consider that you are very vain."

Such an incident relieved the monotony of her travel. She stopped barely long enough at midday to water the Fox and permit him to graze for a brief time; then mounted and rode on until night fell. About sunset she reached the foot-hills of another range of mountains, which stretched, a cloud touching barrier, across her trail.

The Spotted Fox had gone so lame as hardly to be able to travel. Tokala dismounted and anxiously examined the affected hoof. She discovered at length that a small gravel had become imbedded in the frog and that inflammation of the upper hoof had resulted. She was able to extract the offender, yet it was plain that the pony must have rest to recover. When she reflected that several suns must pass before she could hope to travel swiftly Tokala was near to despair. There was nothing for it, however, but to take to the mountains until her pony should recover. She scanned carefully the slopes and cañons of the nearer heights. There was still enough of daylight left to pick a line of feasible ascent.

A cañon waterway with bed of dry sand offered the easiest path for a lame horse, yet also the plainest tracking should pursuit follow close upon her. A brief examination, however, discovered to her that this dry channel was the runway of the big-eared

deer and was travelled by many in going to and from the nearest water. Along with this proof came the knowledge that, upon the mountains, she would find no water for considerable distance.

The deer would quickly obliterate her horse's foot-prints—before morning with surety—but she must return to the lower levels for water or must push on over the heights to find it upon the other side. In the end she decided that into the mountains she must go. There she could watch for the approach of pursuers and, if closely pressed, abandon her pony and take to hiding.

She rode her horse to water and then, for his ease in travel, dismounted and led him. The way to the heights was long and wearisome and the limping pony and Tokala were exhausted when she halted for the night in a copse of piñon.

Tokala dropped upon the pine needles and knew no more until Wi had peered over the mountain heights and searched all the interstices of her shelter with tiny shoots of light. "Hau!" she exclaimed, "I have been very slothful—the enemy might indeed have come upon me as I lay."

She found the lame horse near at hand and nickering plaintively for water. She herself was very thirsty—so much so that she was unable to eat a mouthful of her pemmican. "Come, my Fox," she

said, "we must look for the enemy to know if we may hunt for water."

The pony was so lame as hardly to be able to touch his foot to the ground. He hobbled after his mistress grunting with pain. She saw that she would have great difficulty to lead him down to the stream. Toilsomely she made her way to the nearest height which overlooked the plains she had traveled across. After scanning carefully all the lower levels she could see nothing to alarm. She led her wretchedly lame pony along the crest of a stony ridge looking for a short way of descent to water. A joyful shout escaped her when, in the depths of a rocky gulch, she discovered a pool, a small, crystal clear pond glimmering within a rock basin which, though impossible of access to hoofed creatures, was within her reach by aid of her rawhide picket rope. She loosed her pony, emptied her parflêche bag of its provisions and, with rope in hand, scrambled into the ravine.

She let herself into the notch and drank her fill. Though the draught was somewhat bitter it tasted good. She filled her bag and, though water trickled from it as she climbed, there was enough to quench the pony's thirst.

Further search discovered an opening where the hill grass was sufficient to graze the horse.

There were many deep recesses and rocky ravines grown to thick bodies of small piñons—good hiding if need were and here Tokala determined to stay until her pony should recover. She argued that if she were pursued the Crows would not think of looking for her on the near side of these mountains. Her covert was within sight of the range which sheltered the Absaroke town and, upon any near pinnacle, she could overlook all the plain between. She would not be able to see persons approach in the far distance; but for a considerable time they must—if in daylight—travel within her view.

That any would be able to trail her up the sandy cañon was impossible for, during the morning, she saw droves of deer going to the stream below and, from the point they left the foot-hills, it was certain that they had taken down the trail she had followed. Thus assured Tokala began to feel safe in her retreat. And now with no occupation, but to possess her soul in patience, she found time for reflection. That Cloud Chief had had no part in her capture had become to her a certainty and she wondered if she had been wise in her hasty flight from the Crow village. Had not Koska always proven himself a man of honour? There had been no evil talk of him at the sun dance.

Her mind ran back over all her knowledge of the

man to find justification of the fears which had driven her to undertake escape. She reproached herself at one time for hasty action and again was justified in her fears. It seemed that she might have trusted her lover, in memory of his faithful following and rescue in her time of direst need. Was it not probable that he would have furnished her with a safe escort homeward?

But if he had not been willing to part with her! Ah, she could never have lived among those people. Her face grew hot in memory of the brazen act of Mountain Lamb. No woman among the Oglalas would have allowed herself to be so overcome and, if she had, death would speedily have been her portion. If her husband had not killed her then her father, her brothers or uncles, would have done so. And Tokala felt that such death were richly merited.

Yet the knowledge that her lover was now free, that he could not take back his former wife, that, by the Indian law, he stood as though he had never married, had its influence with the maiden. She felt that it was no longer shame to let her heart go out to him. In the shade of the pines she often sat chanting softly her love for the matchless one. The words she used were vague in meaning and only the heart could interpret them.

Thus amid primeval silence sat the solitary, unafraid because of the righteousness of her cause. There were those, however, who spoke to the lone hider, the wild ones—people of another world. Pine-hen and magpie, deer and whistling rabbit, the big horn, the gray cat of the mountains, chippering squirrels and singing locusts, no one but offered her sympathy and protection.

A great gray bear, twice within as many days, passed upon a little ridge and, though she stood ready to take to a tree, Mato-osansan paused only to give her a kindly glance and then went on about his business. Igmu-hanska, also, the cougar, crept toward her, his yellow eyes ablaze, only to halt, when she was faint of heart, and let his bristling hair drop to sleek innocence and so pass on. Several times it happened that the great yellow cat came near to her while Tokala sat with fearful and fascinated eyes praying to the Great Mystery to preserve her life. Then she knew that Igma-hanska had his lair very near and she moved her shelter to another slope of the ridge.

Often from a height she scanned the immense stretches of plain spread out to west, south and north and would have almost been relieved—so vastly lonesome were the reaches—had she discovered people approaching, even though they had

been Crows in chase of her. Only her faith in the aid of the Most Mysterious could have kept her in the mountains.

Sometimes she almost doubted whether all the Oglalas had not been in a conspiracy to force her into the teepee of the Absaroke chief. Then juster reasoning would say to her, "Lo, what could you expect? Your trail and that of the cunning young men were lost in the Sacred Country and your people could not have known of what tribe they were who would so dare to break the truce of the sun dance. Not one moon has passed since you were taken and you are looking for the impossible. Even since you left the village of the Crows your people may have arrived there seeking you."

When her position became near to unbearable she would descend to the lower heights seeking for roots and buffalo berries. These she found quite plentifully and, upon higher ground, discovered the burrows of numerous bush rabbits. For these she made snares of buckskin strings and, after a little practice, was able to take the small animals almost at will. Flint and steel she had not forgotten among other supplies.

The weather was warm, it being now the last of summer—the moon of no rain. The lone hider needed no cover save her blanket and the shelter of

the piñons. Her night couch was under a pine the branches of which stooped close to the ground and kept off the chill of dews. Her pony mended but slowly. At the end of seven suns he was so little improved that Tokala felt inclined to brave the hardships and perils of a foot-journey. Then, on the eighth morning, the Fox showed marked improvement and the girl was quite happy. She set many snares for rabbits and smoked meat for use upon the trail.

* * * * * *

Ten suns had passed when Tokala took up the journey homeward. She had yet seen no sign of a human being, nor of any life upon the plain except the flashing signals of the antelope which fed upon the highlands, and which gleamed like the turn of a fish's white belly in a lake. Spotted Fox was still somewhat lame but all the fever had gone out of his hoof and she had no more fear that it would seriously trouble the animal. Every day she had bathed the foot in cold water, fetched laboriously up from her pool. And lastly she had bandaged the hock, binding on certain wilted leaves which were known to allay irritation.

She took her way over the mountains, carefully picking a route which her eye had marked from many heights. Hours of slow climbing brought

her to an old trail and to the summit of a pass where again a wide plain stretched below as far as the eye could reach. The distance seemed illimitable—discouraging. Could one ever cross all that wide underworld and hope to go unnoted of enemies? Only strong war parties attempted such travel in the country of the Crows and Blackfeet. She had accomplished the pass and some descent of the opposite slope when Wi was yet two hands high and her horse showed no sign of giving out. Yet her courage failed of nearer approach to the open plains. Much as she feared night travel, because of the nameless terrors of the trail, she concluded to go across the open country in darkness.

Her camp was at the head of a clear mountain stream where a spring bubbled from beneath a ledge and which, after the bitter waters of the other side, Tokala found most refreshing. The woods and the bush and vegetation were here more green and fresh. A variety of highland raspberries had only ripened of late, and the luscious red fruit was so abundant that there was enough for all the people, whether of wings or of four feet. The evidence that many bears were in the habit of feasting among the berry patches did not alarm Tokala, who knew that both mato-sapa, the black bear, and mato-hota, the grizzly, were harmless in this season of abundance.

By the aid of her knife, she made a light wicky-up of bullberry bush and camped by the spring. She awoke at dawn to find the mountain aglow with wonderful light, such as she had seldom seen on land or water. A span of clouds, like eagles' feathers, lay across the sky and these were painted in colours which the eye of mortal may behold save upon rare occasions. Brilliant sky-tints of red and orange, crimson and gold, were displayed with intermingling shades such as no human mind might conceive in the most cunning mixture of earth paints. Added to this gorgeous colouring a far strip of eastern sky was blood red and overhead, touching this band, were reflected lights—the whole a vast illuminated dome which was plainly a manifestation of the Great Mystery.

Gazing upon this divine scheme of colours Tokala's soul was humbled before a manifest shrine of the Most Mysterious. She fell upon her face and prayed, "O Great and Most Mysterious, who dost paint the sky for a sign to thy puny child; let me read thy message aright. If it be that the red mean war and danger, show me a sign that I may escape in due season. Wilt thou, O Most Mysterious, bring me to mine own people in safety; then command of me a penance and I will do it, even to the severing of my right hand."

When she had concluded this prayer Tokala ate her breakfast and again mounted the Fox. Taking a difficult and stony trail she descended for some bow-shots and then her roving eye, scanning the plain below, caught a movement of life in the far distance. She halted and anxiously watched a swarm of creatures, insect-like in the far distance, until these had resolved into what appeared to be a herd of animals. They might be buffalo or elk, but Tokala was fearful and rode her horse into the shelter of overhanging rocks where she might sit and watch, with no possibility of discovery.

No long time was required to convince her that the moving specks—a great cloud of them—were horsemen! And the speed at which they were coming told her that a war-party was riding to strike an enemy. They were coming from toward her own country, but this could signify nothing as to their identity. They might have come all the way from the Yellow River or the Missouri, and have been Pawnees, Arickaras, or Gros Ventres, on their way to strike at the Susuni or the Nez Percé tribes, who had not been bidden to the sun dance.

Were they about to go through the pass she had descended or did they intend to skirt the mountains, passing to the south? This was a question of fearful import to Tokala; for, should they come straight up

the pass, it would be impossible that her trail should escape discovery of their scouts; and the Spotted Fox was not yet in condition for a chase. Should it happen that they chose the pass, she could have no other alternative than to abandon her pony and take to hiding.

With intense anxiety she watched while a big war-party swept on toward the mountains. She tried to count them as they passed like scattered files of ants over the rises and into the prairie ravines. She knew that her estimate was without accuracy, but she had made out that there were at least three hundred and, from their manner of riding erratically and of frequently bunching in groups, she was also certain that the most of them were youthful warriors. That they were all young men she concluded later on.

As a curve of the mountain she was descending swept away to southward, and the party were moving toward its greatest arc, it was impossible to judge—until they should reach a thread of valley which wound among the foot-hills, showing here and there a silver strand of current—whether they were to go on around the spur or turn up the valley of the stream, at whose head she had made her night camp. It was highly important that she should know and Tokala waited with patience. She could not accurately judge the distance to the stream below, but

her eye told her that it was a great number of bow-shots and that the war-party's scouts could not reach her present position for a considerable time. From her height, and in that wonderfully clear atmosphere, horsemen could be seen plainly at the distance of half-a-day's travel—at least to eyes as keen and inured to the open as her own.

On came the scattered hordes over the plain, at last dipping into a turn of the valley which was to her the particular point of solicitude. Once they had reached the channel the foremost riders halted amid-stream—as it appeared to water their horses—and awaited the coming of their fellows. The stragglers were some time in coming up and, in the meantime, those who had arrived drew up on the banks of the creek and dismounted. It soon became evident that they were to make a temporary camp and that her doubt as to the direction they would take in crossing the mountains could not be immediately dispelled.

Tokala let her pony go loose with dragging lariat and secured a perch—concealed—upon a height which commanded every movement of horse or footman in the valley. Nothing was left but to possess her soul in patience until some stir below should indicate which way the party was bound.

As noon came on the atmosphere further cleared

and the men and animals moved about or rested, in such apparent nearness as to induce a feeling of alarm lest she had indeed lingered too long. It now seemed certain that there were spotted horses among the herded animals, which she recognized as belonging to her own clan. When she reached this conviction, she was, for the moment, elated and then as speedily warned to be doubly on the alert against discovery.

For many days all thought of Catches Eagles, or possible danger of being captured by his followers, had been banished from her mind. Since he had failed in overtaking the young men who had carried her off, it had seemed that he must—if he had harboured such thought—have given up all hope of obtaining her for his wife. He was naturally base and evil, from Tokala's point of view, and so would have concluded that she had yielded to the inevitable and had become the wife of his rival. But it appeared that the men below were of her own people, and young men; whom else could they be but the followers of that hated chief, bent upon making war upon the Crows and especially upon a rival who had outwitted the popular Sans Arc.

There was—if this were to prove the case—more than ever a reason that she should keep clear of their clutches. Catches Eagles, if he had really gone to

war on her account, would stop at nothing to gain his purpose, and far better were it for her to have remained among the Crows! Was ever maiden reduced to such straits? That she might not gladly go down to her own people was grief, for the moment, almost too great to be borne.

Yet, so long as there were any element of uncertainty, Tokala felt that she could not rest. She must know, even at greater risk, whether these were Oglalas and if truly Catches Eagles were their leader. To this end she made fast the Spotted Fox to a pine and immediately began descent of the mountain. She avoided the cañon of the brook, along which she had been travelling, and descended a scarp covered with trees and chaparral, a steep up which no rider could have hoped to force his mount. This slope well nigh overhung the Indian camp and, but for its abundant cover, must early have betrayed her to the war-party's scouts posted, as she could see, upon the hills on either side of the valley.

It was toilsome, bone-wearying business, that descent. Sometimes the girl was compelled to crawl on hands and knees, keeping behind the least projection to be out of sight. Toilsomely she descended, inch by inch, until at last, behind a rock ledge and under cover of chaparral, she was able to look down

upon the war camp at such near quarters that individuals were recognizable. In a little time she had discovered enough to convince her that her worst fears were realized.

Numbers of young warriors of the Oglalas mingled with Sans Arcs, gay, clouted fellows, well known at home as adherents of Catches Eagles, who had been travelling in company with the Oglalas when she had been taken. The camp was like a gala party. They had cooked and eaten the noonday meal and, out of sheer exuberance, were engaged in frolics and games. Her eyes sought all the groups eagerly and at last, coming up from the creek where a number had been seated at the water's edge, she saw Catches Eagles himself. He had on his war-shirt and a bonnet of red eagles' feathers, gaily bedecked for fighting.

She had expected this outcome yet Tokala was well nigh overcome at the sight. Her terror, lest the party should take its way up the mountain, discover her horse and so leave her on foot, in this far wilderness, was the most poignant she had suffered since her capture. Even now some one had given a signal and herders were bringing in the ponies. The young men gathered their weapons and their slight camp effects and ran, jostling each other, to meet the

herds. Tokala, lying upon her face, scarcely breathed while the war-party mounted; then—oh, joy!—the cavalcade turned down the river valley and soon they rounded a curve and were out of sight.

XXIII

WHOM THE GODS LOVE

TOKALA again spent a night on the mountains. Her perplexity was extreme. Which way lay safety—if indeed there were anywhere safety for her? Straggling scouts of the war party were likely to appear upon the plain at any time. Then, too, if there were to be a battle with the Crows, and Catches Eagles were to be defeated, the survivors would scatter into small parties for better safety in flight and she would—if travelling toward home—be in constant danger of discovery.

The Sioux girl had never been a lover of war and the thought that her refusal to marry, after she had been allowed her choice of suitors, had brought on a war which had broken the peace of the sun dance, was disheartening. Would there ever again be a time of safety? In all the history of her tribe Tokala had never heard of man or maiden in such pitiful plight. Long she lay upon her face praying to the Most Mysterious for guidance. She was so lying when some one spoke to her in her own tongue.

"My daughter, why this solitary grieving?"

For some reason the girl lifted her face feeling neither surprise nor alarm. She had not recognized his voice, but at once knew the person who stood before her. It was a good father of the white people whom she had seen many times—whom all Indians loved—and whose only fault was that he taught foolish and impractical things in belief. He was known to the Sioux as Holy Hand.

It was father DeSmet, the Catholic missionary, and beyond him stood another and younger man. Tokala felt no fear but rather a rush of gratitude; for no Indian girl could come to harm in the company of Holy Hand. Was not the appearance of these persons indeed an answer to the many prayers she had made to the Great Mystery? The two could not have approached so near, without her hearing their footsteps, had she not been deeply engaged in imploring help of the higher powers.

"So! why, why!" exclaimed the father, "you are surely the daughter of Yellow-Iron of the Oglalas! Is it possible that we find Tokala Noni in this far country and alone?"

One of the secrets of this good man's influence, and immunity from danger, among Indians was his ready recognition of any one whom he had ever met and spoken with. To the smallest child he was able

to recall name and face of each member of any family with whom he had visited. His astonishment at meeting Tokala alone, in a country hostile to the Sioux, was very great but no greater than his understanding of Indians and their ways and his far-seeing grasp of a situation. Without waiting for the girl to reply he said:

"My daughter, you have been captured and have escaped so far from the enemy?"

"It is true;" replied Tokala simply, "the Absaroke took me from south of the Mysterious Country more than one moon since. I got away and am now on my way homeward."

She had arisen and stood before him, her face showing deep traces of hardship and grief. The priest looked at her with a great pity and groaned in spirit that such things could be. "Ah, my poor wild children," he murmured in his own tongue, "shall we ever convert you to be followers of the blessed Jesus?"

Seeing a look of trouble and uncertainty in the girl's face he spoke directly and reassuringly. "My daughter need have no further grief;" he said, "we go to the southwest, the country of the Cheyennes, and you shall travel with us to your own people. We will see you safely with them. A young Frenchman, Raymond Bonhomme, who is with me,

is an Indian trader and friendly with all tribes. No harm can come to you with us unless we are set upon by some strange band of hostiles. We were coming through this pass from the Forked River (Yellowstone) and came upon your horse back here a way. Thinking that a camp or village might be near we dismounted and came on afoot."

While he had been assuring her of his protection Tokala's face had undergone a wonderful change. Home and safety were practically assured to her out of the depths of a hopeless situation! The light that is not seen on land or sea leaped into her eyes; the blood, pulsing back from her sluggish heart, illumined her face and her whole attitude was that of one who has realized absolutely an answer to prayer.

It was not the Indian way to express thanks by words or by open display of emotion. The joy of deliverance had but a brief expression and Tokala, warmly alive and ready to become a helpful companion, gathered her blanket about her.

"You did not camp on the mountain," she asked, "so you have come a long way without eating? Come, I have gathered fruit and have some very good roots which I will roast, besides some meat."

"You are good and thoughtful, my child," said the priest. "It is true that we have been long without eating, having found no water in the pass un-

til we reached the stream where your pony was picketed. It will be good to have coffee and cooked food."

In this reply Tokala read fresh evidence of her answer to prayer. Had the priest and his friend come the same old trail which she had followed they would have found water and camped a long time since and so she might have been gone when they had reached this point. She cast her eye up over the slope and saw that the pair must have come through a gap to northward and so joined her trail at exactly the place where she had camped for the night. She no longer doubted that she should reach home in safety and find all well among her people. The inner light of this joy was upon her face, rendering it again exceedingly comely, when the priest brought her face to face with Raymond Bonhomme. The young trader had at first appeared about to join them; then, seeing the two apparently well acquainted and earnestly engaged in conversation, he had wandered to a little distance.

The Sioux girl prepossessed in favour of all Frenchmen—Wasicunikcéka—lifted her frank eyes to the tall trader and offered her hand with the winning confidence of an Indian woman who finds herself wholly in the hands of friends in time of need.

"How-how-how!" she exclaimed softly and the

trader inwardly vowed that he had never seen so fair a girl among the dusky tribes.

"How, how," he replied and, to Tokala's further pleasure, addressed her perfectly in her own tongue. She even noted that he used the soft L sounds, heard only among Dakotas who spoke the Teton dialect.

"It is the daughter of the chief Yellow-Iron of the Oglalas;" the priest had said, "the poor girl has been captured and has escaped from those rascally Crows."

"So you are the daughter of my friend Yellow-Iron," said Bonhomme, showing his white teeth in a smile which had entranced more than one young woman of her race. "I do not think those Oglalas who trade at Ft. Assiniboin ever brought their families?"

"No they did not;" answered the girl, "they had to pass through the enemy's country but they wished to go to your fort because you gave them better trade than the Long Knives at Yellow River."

Bonhomme's face lighted with appreciation of the tribute. He was a young man of no more than thirty years, but he was known far and wide for his fair dealings in the fur country. He was also a good Catholic, trusted of father DeSmet, and had left clerks in charge of his store to go on a mission for the church. Nowhere in that wild country could the lone

and desperate Sioux girl have fallen into better hands than now she had by the merest of accidents.

"Now for coffee and meat," cried the priest almost gaily. "I know that Tokala Noni is a good cook and she is longing to give her services."

Together they went to their horses, where Bonhomme quickly relieved a pack pony of its burden. While Tokala built a little fire of dry sticks the trader brought forth a slender cooking kit, some meal, bacon and coffee. Deftly Tokala boiled a mush and fried bacon, cooking, as the Ogalas had long since learned, the simple dishes of the trader and trapper. Father DeSmet made the coffee and the three sat down Indian style to a meal to which hunger gave a zest quite unknown to the epicure.

While she had been preparing and during the meal Bonhomme's admiration for the girl was manifest in his eyes. Though her skirt of fawnskin and her moccasins were soiled and worn, her dress without ornaments, and the constant exposure of out-of-doors had given her skin the hue of Africa, she was yet a handsome creature. The perfect oval of her face, the great dark eyes, a Greek nose, to be envied among the fairest of his race, the wide, beautifully curved lips; all this appealed to the intelligent Frenchman's love of beauty. Nor were the lithe figure, the small, finely-veined hands—hands which might have been

modelled as typical of the most ancient breeding—the exquisitely turned, round wrist and forearm, clasped by the single ornament she wore, a bracelet of silver coins, less attractive than the face.

And a womanly character, an absolute purity of soul, spoke in every act and attitude of the girl. Bonhomme's admiration was so open, though wholly ignored of Tokala, that father DeSmet soon attempted to engage him in conversation. In this he was partly successful when the maiden, suddenly leaving them at their meal, went out to her horse. That she was in haste to take the trail homeward was evident.

"No wonder the poor girl is in a hurry;" said the father, "she will in spite of her apparent nonchalance know no ease of heart until we have placed her in her father's lodge. I think indeed, Raymond, that, in all your experience among Indians, you have yet much to learn of Indian women. There are certain tribes of the Sioux, and the Oglalas are among them, where the girls are very carefully reared. That she is dependent upon us—two men—though she utterly trusts us—is quite as poignant a situation for this Oglala maid, nay, even more so, than if she had been bred in a convent of your own city of Montreal."

The covert reproof in this allusion was not lost upon Bonhomme, whose face went red with embar-

rassment. He finished his meal in silence not again looking at the girl who, when they arose from the meal, had already saddled and mounted her horse. In silence the packing was finished and the trio set out down the mountain trail.

Tokala went ahead riding astride, after the fashion of Indian women, and Bonhomme noted her graceful and natural seat, her slim back and perfect carriage and suddenly there came to him the desirability of securing this Oglala maiden for a wife. Here was one perfectly adapted to sharing the life which fate had marked out for him. He had never yielded to the temptation, so potent among traders, to take a dusky mate in the lawless and loose fashion of the frontier. He had looked forward, ten or fifteen years hence, to the time when he should retire with a competence, to a return to his native city of Montreal and to marriage with one of its fair daughters, to the rearing of a family in his old age, as many another trader had done. But now he had met with a girl of a wild tribe who, if she might be converted to his faith, would adorn his forted home and leave him free to follow to the end of life his profitable vocation. He was young and the blood leaped in his veins and youth was the time for marriage! As he rode behind the priest his fancy could be indulged without detection and the more he looked upon the

Sioux maiden the fiercer became his desire to possess her. He would marry her by the holy rites of his church; his children should be legitimate heirs of his fortune. Father DeSmet himself should perform the ceremony of marriage, and the christenings.

Why, after all, should a man of his sort wish to wait until middle age to marry some petted and spoiled beauty who would very likely take him for the sake of the wealth which would enable her to adorn her pampered person?

So while they were descending the mountain he indulged in ardent day dreams. And the wish to possess this fairest of Sioux grew to fierce insistant desire.

Tokala kept the lead, riding silently and demurely, until they had reached the flats of the river valley among the foot-hills. Here the girl turned abruptly to the left taking the rougher ground for advance and leaving the old trail they had been following. The priest halted and called to her.

"Ho, my daughter," he said, "why do you leave the plain road? It is down the river and along this old trail that we must reach the Oglala villages."

The girl stopped and turned a confused face toward her followers.

"I had thought," she said, "that it would be best for us to go away from this river. It is now that the

Absaroke will be hunting buffalo and these will be found near to the streams."

"I see no signs of the buffalo," answered the priest decidedly, "and I think it will be best for us to keep to a trail which will insure us against going astray and the consequent loss of time. What think you, Bonhomme?"

"I think as you do, father;" replied the trader, "we shall save time by keeping the trail. Our friend need not fear meeting the Crows in our company. I think, however, that there is little chance of that, for the Crows hunt toward the Yellow Stone where the buffalo are, at this season, always more plentiful."

Tokala could not gainsay this reasoning. Reluctantly and modestly she turned back and followed her protectors. It was but little time until they came upon the late camp of the Sioux which Tokala had wished to avoid. Both the eyes of Father DeSmet and of Bonhomme searched the ground when they came upon trampled earth where horses of the recent campers had been tethered. Priest and trader looked at each other in surprise. It was evident that a large party of Indians had recently left the spot. There having been neither rain nor dew their pony tracks appeared even fresher than they were. These seemed hardly cold and knowing the girl had—from her own

account and other evidences—stopped over night within sight of this valley they were much puzzled.

A glance at Tokala, too, showed both these astute persons that she had been ready to conceal something from them.

"She knew of these campers," said the priest, speaking in French, "and why she should have wished to keep us in ignorance passes me. These children of the wild are very peculiar. Do you ride on a little, Raymond, while I engage the girl's confidence. We must surely know about this."

"Certainly," replied Bonhomme. "I, too, think it best that we should know."

Tokala was coming on as though the deserted camp had gone unnoted or was at least of no consequence. DeSmet waited a minute or two and then gave the girl no chance of evasion.

"My daughter," he said, "it appears that a large party of Indians have but just broken camp here. Surely you must have seen them and perhaps can tell who they were?"

Tokala looked at the questioner earnestly, her face slightly flushed from the knowledge that she had attempted to deceive him. Then, seeing no subterfuge would avail, she glanced at the trader inquiringly.

"Let us dismount here and be seated," said the

priest, "and you shall tell me all. Mr. Bonhomme will ride on a way."

Thus assured Tokala got off her horse and took a seat. Father DeSmet dismounted and sat opposite her. Tokala told him briefly all that seemed needful to tell. She began with the sun dance and related candidly what had happened to her.

When the priest had digested this he said, "My daughter, you have had a severe trial and the end is not yet. Because of you there is about to be battle and bloodshed and we must see what can be done to stop it. I should not feel that I had done my duty if I were to go on and make no effort to stay these young men from acts which must end in continued war between your people and the Crows. Evidently the Sioux think that you are still a captive. You must come with us and we must overtake them in time to delay a battle. This may seem hard to you but you are with me, under my protection, and I will see that no harm comes to you."

Tokala sat in deep thought for some minutes; then she spoke.

"I do not wish," she said, "that there shall be war about this matter. It is too foolish and our people have never before broken the peace of the sun dance. If you can get these young men to go home without fighting, I will not stand in your path."

"Rightly spoken!" exclaimed the priest heartily. "We will follow this war party and the trader and I will do our best to keep you hidden from their sight until I have brought them to reason."

To no other man excepting her father would Tokala have conceded the safety of her keeping, on such an errand. She knew well that no man had so much influence among the tribes and, after again thinking of the matter, she replied.

"What am I," she said, "that my safety should interfere in a matter of so much importance? If our people are not to abide by the sacred peace of the sun dance where shall we look for safety?"

To the father this argument was as the vanity of vanities. He regarded the sun dance and all its rites as inventions of the devil; still, he saw in her concession the means to an end and refrained from comment. When one is dealing with the heathen one must, in a measure, adapt his means to the heathen point of view. This was his philosophy and the secret of his success as a pacificator—which on many an occasion he had proven.

"Good, and well spoken," he replied readily. "I will now talk with Mr. Bonhomme and we will speedily take up the trail of this misled war-party."

His speech with Bonhomme, however, was prolonged and his plan not easily adopted. The trader

felt no call, under the circumstances, in going out of his way to prevent a fight between the Sioux and the Crows, and especially to head off a lot of young hot heads who were after the very prize he had begun to covet. To attempt to stay the hand of some hundreds of young Sioux, bent upon reprisal, seemed to him a wild goose chase of pronounced type. Yet such was the influence of the devoted missionary over all with whom he came in contact Bonhomme was, in the end, prevailed upon to take up with him the trail of the Sioux.

When night fell the trio were well on their way toward the Crow village. Bonhomme, after cogitating anew upon the folly of such an undertaking, might yet have withdrawn from the pursuit but for his growing interest in Tokala. For he reasoned, in the end, that the Sioux would probably have met either with victory or defeat before they could be come up with. But he was French and mercurial. He had found a woman to fit his fancy and was plunged heels over head in love.

XXIV

MAID AND MISSIONARY

WHEN their camp-fire had burned low Tokala wrapped her blanket about her and faded into the darkness. Neither priest nor trader knew where she slept. She returned at daylight to find a pot boiling and the men engaged in a strange operation. They were sitting near together with a cup of white foamy stuff between them. They had painted their chins with this in a ridiculous fashion. Each held a small mirror in one hand and a knife with a loose handle in the other, and they were running these knives over their faces in a seemingly reckless fashion. Tokala would not appear to be surprised. Seeing them absorbed in a mystery she went softly about cooking their breakfast.

In a surreptitious manner she watched the busy mortals and discovered presently that they were removing their beards even with those perilous sharp blades. Much she marvelled but said nothing. She turned her back to the performance and then—oh, the curiosity of woman!—she shyly brought forth her own dirk knife and, seizing the end of a long braid, drew the edge across some loose hairs and looked carefully for results. There were none. Ah,

these mysterious Frenchmen! how was it that they whetted their knives to such an edge? Must they ever be in advance of the Indian in all things?

When the task of her companions was completed Tokala noted that they seemed much more pleasant and satisfied with themselves. Doubtless this was because their faces were so smooth and shiny and they thought themselves to be much finer looking after the removal of a rough, uncomely growth. And like a woman—since evidently they expected this to be noticed—Tokala utterly ignored them until the mush was done and the bacon and coffee ready for consumption.

Little was said that morning for they knew that an exceedingly hard day's travel lay before them. They had reason from appearance of the trail to expect that they could come up with the Sioux by nightfall, if already these were not defeated and scattered. Tokala as usual took the lead. She was so evidently possessed of a desire to ride in advance and out of earshot that father DeSmet marvelled somewhat until enlightenment came to him in an avowal from Bonhomme. It was mid-forenoon and the trader had ridden in a meditative silence which the father, for reasons of his own, had not broken. Then Bonhomme spoke in his own frank and winning way.

"Father," he said, "I wish to marry this Sioux girl and to do so in our own way—the way of the church. I do not believe that I shall ever be able to break loose from the fur-trade or at least from trade with the Indians. How fitting then that I should take a good Indian wife and rear my children in the Catholic fold. Possibly I may beget children who, in later years, will be able to labour usefully in our Indian missions."

The young man spoke with earnestness and enthusiasm and the father took some time to consider his reply. Which way his sentiment lay in the matter he could doubtless quickly have told; but he had the diplomacy of his kind and wished to make such answer as might work for the good of the individual and the cause of the church.

"Well, my son," he said, at length, "if you have set your heart upon this thing I must e'en do the best I can for you; but don't indulge too largely in the hope that you can marry Tokala Noni—don't set your heart too much upon it. It may be that we can win her to the church through the complication which has made of her a football and a toss-about among these wild folk. You do not wish to marry her unless she can be converted?"

"Her conversion to the faith is certainly greatly to be desired," admitted Bonhomme, "but that will,

of course, if it come not sooner, follow her marriage to me."

"Not necessarily," returned the priest, "and for my part I should desperately dislike, Raymond, to see you married to a stubborn native woman. Well, well, I will talk to her and we shall see what may be the fruitage."

"Question her finally before me, father," said Bonhomme, "I wish to get her point of view, if she will talk."

The father smiled indulgently. "Very well," he replied, "at noon then I will speak to the maid of our faith."

Noon seemed long for the waiting. The trader was of an impetuous turn even for a Frenchman.

"Do you go on, father," he urged, "and prepare the way for what I may say to her very soon. I will ride in the rear."

"No laggard in love art thou, my son," laughed the priest, "but verily of as hot blood as any savage of them all."

Astute in most affairs dealing with his Indian friends, DeSmet had little doubt as to the ultimate success of the trader's wooing. Fur traders, whether or not they were young and good to look upon, were accustomed to choosing among the comeliest daughters of the tribes. It was true that girl or woman often

objected until finally forced, by the influential of her clan, to accept an alliance which might mean much of benefit to them. If the daughter of Yellow-Iron were not presently to be won Raymond must patiently wait until they had her among the Oglalas. In the meantime if the seeds of religion might be planted in her heart so much the better for her future happiness. Her clan was powerful among Dakotas and if this maid could be brought into the fold the father saw much advantage accruing to the true church. To marry her to Bonhomme and to plant in her breast the sacred truths of religion! Sooner or later they must succeed; they could and would and, though the fruitage were not reaped in his day, there would be further accessions to the church—other links to bind the benighted ones, and bring them within her beneficent embrace. So the father rode blithely forward in a service which delighted his soul.

When he came up with her Tokala turned her face and, seeing that the trader was not joining, gave the priest a shy smile.

"You seem cheerful, my daughter," said DeSmet, "but it is not good always to be alone. So the Master of Life has taught us in His holy book. I think I have never talked to you personally about our holy religion. There have been so many duties when I

have been with my children the Oglalas. I wish to tell you now the story of Jesus who is Saviour of all persons who will come to Him after the manner of our communion. My daughter, will you incline your ear to the truth as I shall speak it?"

Tokala remained thoughtful for a moment; then with a candour which encouraged the priest she said:

"I have heard something of the mysteries of the white people but I understand very little about them. If you wish to tell me about your wonder-workers do so and I shall listen."

The good father read in this answer that Tokala would have preferred to ride on by herself. But the claims of his religion were above all other consideration and he rejoiced that his overture had not been rejected.

He began, as he had begun with many another of the "benighted ones," gently, with allusions to the peculiar beliefs of her own people upon which he refrained from casting any reflections. In many ways, and by illustrations familiar to her, by the great numbers, prosperity and powers of the white people, he argued that the true God was not yet known of all men. To the limit of attainment in the Dakota tongue, and Tokala's understanding of it was well-nigh perfect, he made known to her the essential points of his religion.

Bonhomme riding behind, noted the priest's animated gestures as he warmed to his ever new theme and Tokala's apparently respectful attention, and his elation mounted as the miles of a dull trail were covered. Between religion and love the heart of this beautiful savage must melt. And she *was* most beautiful in her wild way. Once she had embraced his religion and had been taught his language, which most Indians learn easily, Bonhomme felt that he should be willing to present her as his wife even in Montreal and Quebec.

At noon came the test of instruction. They had finished a lunch of cold meat and were to halt further for the grazing of their ponies when the priest turned to Tokala who would have wandered off by herself.

"My daughter," he said, "I have told you about the Saviour of men as He is known to us. Have you aught to say why you should not embrace our faith?"

The girl seemed in no way disturbed or surprised at the question, but looked enquiringly at Bonhomme as though to know whether what she might say could be of interest to him. "He also wishes to hear you speak," said the father and Bonhomme smiled encouragement.

Tokala seated herself, as those do who have a

story to tell, leaning slightly forward, and spoke equally without enthusiasm or embarrassment.

"Father," she said, addressing the priest, "you have been very good to tell me about your wakan people, for I really like to know what other folk think about the mysteries. It seems that there are a great many trails to follow, in this, as in hunting the buffaloes. I have listened carefully to what you have told me, but it does not appear that your wakan people can be of benefit to us who live in a different way. I think there are a great number of these Mysterious Ones who are wiser than we. If this one Easu (Jesus), to whom you pray, had truly intended to make himself the great one of all men he would have appeared to the Indian as well as to the white man. Doubtless he is a very great person, living somewhere, but if he is not able now to bring people out of the grave I do not think that my folk would care to pray to him.

"Truly he does not know the Indian as you seem to think;" and the girl looked at the priest with an earnest conviction, the candour of which was well-nigh irresistible, "he has never in any way spoken to my people. We often hear the voices of the Great Mystery, of the thunder people, and underworld folk. The Most Mysterious speaks to us, indeed, from the clouds, in the trees, and by the tongues of birds,

animals and creeping things. Our hunters and our warriors have often been brought out of great peril in this way. You say, father, that the great ones of your wakan people are only three; that one is a father, one is son and the other a ghost. These are indeed a very few of the higher ones to answer prayers of the big villages of people you have told me of. That is doubtless the reason they have no time to attend to the Indian.

"It is true," she continued, "that your people make many things that we do not have and that you brought to us the mysterious-iron that shoots with fire-dust. But we were better off without these things which your coming has made necessary. You, father, have always done well by us, but not so with many of the Long Knives. They have brought to us dreadful diseases and the fire-water which destroys mind and body. Did we know where to go, that they are not, we should yet leave our own country and flee from them all. Your Easu does not love the Indians as you have thought. He allows his children to kill and rob our people. He may be very powerful but it is plain that he did not die to give life to the Indian."

Frenchmen, to their honour be it said, were not associated in the Sioux mind with the "Americans," or Long Knives; hence, there was nothing in Tokala's

talk to which Bonhomme could have taken upon him to answer had he inclined to do so.

While the girl was speaking the priest's chin had dropped upon his breast and, as neither of the men seemed inclined to answer her, Tokala got up and went out to her horse. Bonhomme, who had maintained the utmost gravity while she was speaking, now turned a twinkling eye upon DeSmet. The corners of the trader's mouth twitched and he was near to laughter at the priest's discomfiture. Tokala had so calmly and so convincingly disposed of the whole subject that somehow, when applied to the Indian, it had a finality for them all. Seeing DeSmet with downcast face, however, Bonhomme checked his unseasonable mirth.

"How could one answer?" he asked soberly.

"I could not;" said the father with sadness, "from the Indian point of view what she said is unanswerable."

Bonhomme was surprised at this admission but made no comment, and the trio again took up the dusty trail, Tokala in the lead.

* * * * * *

It seemed that, after all, the war-party were not going directly against the Crows. Their trail led to south of the range of mountains behind which was the

big town of the Absaroke. Long before the Sioux had come within sight of the keenest eyes upon those mountain tops they had turned into the deep valley of a river which ran to the northwest. And, at the fork of this stream a little further on, Tokala halted and waited for DeSmet and Bonhomme. She pointed to the ground and then to the deep-cut valley of a branch. Another broad and fresh trail had joined the one they were following.

"Alas," exclaimed the priest, "we are too late. The Crows will have come upon them before this."

"So it appears to me, father," said the trader. "I think it's best we should turn back here."

"Not so," said Tokala and her face was illumined with joy, "this new trail is indeed the trail of the Ogalalas and my father is with them. He also has come seeking me."

Her voice was calm and even, but there was a ring of exultation in it.

"See," she went on leading the way a little further along, "these trails come together here and the new one follows the old. The Absaroke could not have been so foolish, for the Dakota has always scouts in the rear."

"True enough," commented Bonhomme. "I think as she does," he said to DeSmet, "that we have come up with a trail that will fetch two war-parties together.

And they're both big companies. If there's to be a fight it would be worth seeing."

DeSmet mused for a moment. "Why do you think these last are your people and that your father is with them?" he asked of Tokala.

She seemed surprised at the question.

"The Oglalas have discovered those who took me. Their trailers are the greatest among Indians," she answered.

The joining of the trails had spoken to her as plainly as we of another world may read an open book. She knew perfectly now that all the Oglala warriors, and perhaps some of other tribes of Sioux, were out to make reprisal upon the Crows. They must long since have given herself up for lost although diligently, and at last successfully, they had searched for trace of her abductors. This trail, as she had thought, had been lost in the Sacred Country. And how reluctant must have been her father to believe that any tribe could have broken the truce of the sun dance! But the Oglalas had come upon the truth at last. Farther than this she was not able to argue at the moment. It seemed that all the warriors of her tribe were out to avenge her capture. There was evidence of perfect collusion between the two parties whose combined trail she and her companions were about to follow. For the rest she could gladly wait

until the Sioux were come up with. Nor did she doubt for a moment that her people would be successful in chastising the Crows.

"The Sioux," she said to the father, "will be very cunning. They will attack the Absaroke from the other side of the mountains. We shall not catch up with them until to-morrow and to do this we must ride swiftly."

"Let us be off then;" replied DeSmet, "it may not yet be too late to prevent a battle. When Yellow-Iron and his men shall know that you have come safely out of the hands of your captors they will surely listen to the good spirits, who have brought you in safety to me, and who are urging us on their trail to prevent a useless shedding of blood."

To this Tokala made no answer. Whatever she thought she was more than eager now to reach the camp of the Oglalas. That Yellow-Iron would insist upon punishing the Crows for breaking the peace of the sun dance and for abducting his daughter, was doubtless her innermost conviction. Her condition, first as a helpless captive and next as an uncertain wanderer, the prey of circumstances, and finally as dependent upon the white men for protection, had shifted to one of importance in a large drama likely to be played and to be played quickly. As she rode, again in advance of her benefactors, there

was that in her carriage which proudly spoke of her new prestige.

"If ever there was an Indian princess, one fit to give dignity anywhere to the title, she is one," declared Bonhomme when the girl was beyond ear-shot. "Is she not, father, a fitting mate for one in my position and shall I not make some sacrifice if need be to bring so promising an addition to the church?"

The father did not answer for a time and when he spoke it was in a tone of monologue.

"No, no," he said, "the girl is a heathen, inbred of a thousand generations. There are Indians who are amenable, whom the Holy Spirit can touch, but not these western Sioux. It will yet take a generation or two of closer contact with our race and finally of savage despair to save their souls. When the girl saw her father's trail the light of battle was in her eye. She will not help us, Raymond, she will not help us."

The trader did not answer and the trio rode on, following the broad windings of a stream which had cut its valley deep into the bad-lands of an arid region. An army might have marched for days unseen, except within this hidden valley. The only signs of life—except the trail they were following—were the crows, blackbirds and magpies, which

chattered at them from the limbs of scattered cottonwoods, or an occasional brood of young geese which rose squalling and flapped heavily away on newly tried wings; and now and then, upon some flat, the marmots of a populous town shrilled at them.

At sunset they were yet some hours behind the war-parties. And this though Tokala's pony had recovered from the stiffness in his leg and she had pushed their travel relentlessly. When they had finished the evening meal father DeSmet wandered into a near-by grove for a season of meditation and prayer. Tokala seemed uneasy and inclined to retreat for her night bivouac; but Bonhomme adroitly engaged her in conversation and she was too polite not to listen to one to whom she owed so much. The trader had determined to win her, despite her attitude toward his religion.

He began to tell her of his fort and of the many Indian tribes who traded with him. Speaking of her father's visits to his post he named many of her tribesmen—among them uncles and cousins of her own—who, he said, were his friends. He piled dry sticks high upon their camp-fire, lighting up a broad area, to give her confidence. Then he told of many friends of the Indian among those of his race, a great number of whom had mingled their blood with that of their darker brothers—only a

little darker, he declared—and how his own people once had lived just as hers did now, moving from place to place and subsisting mostly upon fish and game.

From this, and by easy transition, he talked of his trader friends and employees who had married Indian women and of their children whom he said they loved quite as well as Indians could love their offspring. By the bright firelight Bonhomme noted a growing colour in the girl's face, as he neared the climax of his argument. She understood what he was about to ask of her! The trader might, with becoming modesty, have fancied that he was not uncomely of person and that, on a number of occasions, the Sioux girl had looked at him with shy approval. For the moment his heart beat quickly and he believed the time had come to make an avowal to this incomparable Indian maid.

"I think you know," he said impulsively, "what is in my heart. I wish to make you my wife. Listen, you shall have a lodge such as you never dreamed of, and you shall indeed be the wife of a chief among my people. You will be in position to command of me any favour which I may do for your family or for your people. Whenever I can help the Oglalas in the struggle to retain their lands, and to stay the hands of those Americans whom you know

are continually trying to seize their property, I will do so. What do you say, Tokala, beautiful one, shall we two go through life hand in hand?"

Though she had guessed what was finally to be the outcome, Tokala was taken by surprise at his sudden and impetuous proposal. Her face which, beneath its dark hue, had flushed to the colour of crimson, suddenly paled, and she sat, for a moment, looking fixedly into the blackness which prevailed outside their fire-lighted circle. She controlled her emotion by a supreme effort and spoke in a calm, even tone, familiar to the trader.

"You should not have spoken these words to me," she said, "for what you ask is not for my ears. You are a white man—I am an Indian—it is impossible."

Her words were as cold and distant as the approach of a snow-storm; her attitude and atmosphere repellent as those of an enemy. Bonhomme felt that a barrier had risen between himself and the girl as impassable as a cañon of the Colorado.

When she had concluded, Tokalo arose calmly and passed into the darkness. On the following morning DeSmet and Bohomme waited in vain for her appearance at camp. She did not come and a search discovered that she had, early in the night, taken the trail of the Sioux.

XXV

AT THE WAR CAMP

AS upon another occasion Tokala was without surprise when the first human creature to come within range of her hungry vision proved to be Keyahanhi. After a night's travel down the river-valley—a night of such terror as she had never felt in the mountains—she came, shortly after daylight, within sight of a thin veil of smoke which marked the Sioux camp-fires.

It truly seemed that her spirit had returned to her body out of the valley of death. Her sudden resolution to push on in the darkness had been soon repented; yet, having taken the trail, she would not turn back. All night she had ridden in the black shadows of the bluffs, past the vaguely gaping maws of gulches and coulées, and along the untraceable channel of the river where the sudden looming of giant cottonwoods—despite her grim bravery—had seemed the certain embodiment of immense ghost-women who had once chased her ancestors away from the Yellow River. The honk of a startled water-fowl had been for an instant the very voice of Unktéhi, the river monster, and the hoot-

ing of an owl, the shrilling of a locust, the near yapping of coyotes, familiar and beneficent voices in daylight, had set the chill of fear tingling over her body. For these dark, deep valleys are the terror of the Indian woman and child, being the places of tragedy, and the abodes of evil creatures which do not come near the firelight but lie in wait to pounce upon unfortunate wanderers.

The Spotted Fox had kept the trail without her aid and so, with nothing to occupy her mind, surrounded by shifting shadows, weary and nervous, the girl had endured that she might escape from an obligation and a situation which had become unbearable. The first sky-tint of morning, despite her weariness, had been hailed with such joy as a redeemed soul may feel; and when, a little later, she saw the smoke of her people's fires her twenty-four hours of almost continual travel sat upon her lightly.

Before she came within sight of the camp, when its pony herds yet appeared as clouds of insects on the bluff slopes, a man on horseback rounded a point of timber and came toward her. Almost instantly she knew it was Keyahanhi. He had, in the last two years, grown much stronger in his back and an appliance which a trader had taught him to make had enabled him to get about more freely and to

ride a horse with comfort. He had never before gone out with a war-party; and so Tokala had not thought of him as being at this camp, where she was looking for shelter and protection solely to her father. As has been said, however, she felt no surprise. The brother had come to help find her and who more quickly would avenge her wrongs?

His face was lighted by an even greater joy than her own as he approached at a canter. "So you are come!" he shouted. "I knew it! I knew it! I arose at dawn to come out and meet you. I felt that you were coming and I knew, indeed, that you were riding along this trail!"

Wonderful as this might seem to those uninitiated in the mysteries of the wilderness, Tokala accepted the brother's statement as of natural import.

"It was the Most Mysterious who spoke to you, brother;" she said, as they halted face to face, "and I have prayed constantly to be delivered to my people in safety."

"Even so," responded Keyahanhi looking deeply into her eyes. For a moment he sat regarding her and then he spoke.

"You are yet a maiden, sister?"

Tokala's cheeks were suffused with colour but she replied calmly and as to a proper and rightful query, "Brother, I am even as you saw me last."

"Now may the greatly Mysterious Ones be praised," ejaculated Keyahanhi, "and, of a truth, will your father be glad to see you. Come, let us hasten to the lodges of our warriors."

Side by side they rode down the valley. In time the big Sioux camp lay, like a painted panorama, spread out before them. More than two thousand warriors, with no women among them, were encamped along the reaches of the river. Though they had brought only teepees for sheltering them in messes of ten to fifteen, yet their village seemed endless in extent. No wonder they had thought it unnecessary to conceal such a camp! Truly, thought Tokala, the Oglalas had nothing to fear from their enemies of whatsoever nation. It was apparent that they were ready for battle with any who might be hardy enough to come against them.

As they jogged slowly onward Tokala told briefly the tale of her adventures and in return learned from Keyahanhi the meaning of this vast assemblage of warriors. Some things were as she had expected. Catches Eagles and several of his young men had been first to discover the trail of herself and her captors, and to follow this as far as might be. These had returned and reported that they had lost trace of her in the Sacred Country and that the Cheyennes had taken Yellow-Iron's daughter!

That cunning and wicked Sans Arc! Before Keyahanhi could go further with his story Tokala saw its sequel. The Oglalas had been wrought into a rage which meant war upon those who had broken the peace of the sun dance. Two parties had swiftly formed to go against them—one headed by the Sans Arc, the other by Yellow-Iron. These were to keep in close communication with each other and to meet the enemy as advance and reserve forces, thus to leave no chance of defeat. Hardly had they hoped to rescue the captive but only to avenge her taking off. So they had marched to the country of the Cheyennes to find these people resting peacefully and securely in their village on the Little Muddy River. Determined that there should be no mistake in wreaking vengeance, and that he might not incur by any chance the odium of breaking a sacred truce, Yellow-Iron surrounded the town and sent in a courier to demand the return of his daughter.

The Cheyennes were so evidently astonished and so strenuous in their denial of guilt that it was thought no more than fair that their village should be searched. As the Sioux warriors outnumbered those of the villagers two to one this concession had been the more magnanimous. Then a rigid search and examination of individuals had failed to discover

any evidence that the Cheyennes had been guilty of abduction.

Only one among the Oglalas had misdoubted the faith and the report of Catches Eagles and his party and that one was Keyahanhi who had ventured to say to Yellow-Iron, at the outset, that he would find his daughter among the Crows. But Keyahanhi had not given voice to suspicions which he had no evidence of a tangible nature to support. He had, because of his occult powers, been allowed to accompany the party of Yellow-Iron. When the Cheyennes, also, had declared their belief that the Crows had stolen his daughter, the Oglala chief no longer doubted but set out at once to chastise the offenders. The two war-parties had travelled together until they came to the mountains where Tokala had been in hiding, when they had split and gone, one on either side; and it appeared that, had the girl stayed where she was first in hiding, she must have seen her father's party go by. The Oglalas had passed so near that she could hardly have missed them.

"I, indeed," said Keyahanhi, "believed that you were with the Crows; but no one would listen to me at first, and here you are with us."

Tokala made no reply and together they entered the camp of the Sioux. When they came in front of her father's teepee Yellow-Iron came out at their

call and, seeing his daughter before him, raised his hands above his head and cried in a loud voice. He was not ashamed to weep before his warriors and his voice reached to the nearer teepees as he shouted,

"Lo, my daughter is come to us from the village of the enemy. Ho, all ye Oglalas, listen to me—the lost is returned to us—let us therefore consider what is to be done." And the braves gathered about in scores to greet the maiden.

Criers were sent the length of the long war-village to proclaim that the chief's daughter was found and that she was returned to her father even as she had been taken. It was also told that Yellow-Iron had wept and no one marvelled. Soon the story of Tokala's rescue spread and the chief men gathered in council to consider what should be done. Some were for reprisal, for marching against the Crows as they had planned; others argued that now there should be no fighting, that, though the provocation were great, the Sioux were so bound by the truce of the sun dance that they could not avoid a breach if matters were carried to hostilities.

Among these last Catches Eagles was conspicuous. He was strenuous in urging upon his fellows that they should take the trail for home or turn the expedition into one of buffalo hunting. His speech to the council touching the matter was a model of Indian

eloquence and there were those who marvelled at his enthusiasm, his evident desire to depart from the enemy's country without a fight. Hitherto, no one, in all their company, had seemed so anxious to meet the Crows in battle.

There was but one person present who understood the drift of the young chief's eagerness to be going home and this was Keyahanhi. Tokala, in her story of capture, had told the brother what Little Hand had said. And what she had told had merely confirmed the belief of this marvellous young reader of men's minds.

Keyahanhi answered Catches Eagles in the council.

He arose slowly, among the open-air crowds who had been summoned to take part in the deliberations. Beyond doubt his voice should have been in favour of peace and all who knew him were surprised at what he had to say.

"I am aware," he said, "that one has spoken whom we have highly honoured. That he who was master of ceremonies at the sun dance should counsel for the sacred truce is not surprising. I believe that this young man was first to strike the trail of those so wicked as to carry off the daughter of one who was their host at the sacred dance. It would seem, however, that having found the trail of these miscreants his eyes should have been too shrewd to lose it. Be-

cause of this lack of caution we went against the Cheyennes, and were in danger of making enemies of our friends and allies. Dakotas, I do not think that this young man's counsel is entitled to consideration. Having come thus far to rescue her, shall we go home and say to our women, 'Lo, Tokala Noni escaped and came to us, therefore we thought it best to hasten away from the enemy's country'? We have the great count[1] of warriors present and shall we tamely submit to this insult and go home without knowing who is responsible? Shall we allow these Absaroke to think that we are old women, not worthy of account, if they shall choose to steal from us? Can we afford to go back without demanding reparation of the wrong done to us and to all who took part in the sun dance? Let us at least call these Crows to account. We may not need to fight, but we ought to demand that they shall deliver to us the men who carried off the daughter of their host."

There was some astonishment at the delivery of this speech. Keyahanhi was a man of influence and his words carried weight. The argument had all been going one way and it seemed that the council would be dissolved in favour of going home. Now the debate waxed fierce and one after another warriors of renown took part.

[1] One thousand or more.

Thus matters stood when, at her father's teepee, Tokala learned of the strenuous debate—that Keya-hanhi had turned the tide of opinion in favour of war! So astonishing this seemed that she was at first inclined to doubt. But the matter was confirmed at the midday meal and she found herself face to face with a crucial test of fealty. Should this great host of warriors go against the Crow town there could be but one outcome—a large part of the villagers, big and little, must perish. Cloud Chief, successful as he had been in war, could have little chance against the sudden onslaught of so mighty an army.

All the available warriors of the Oglalas and the Sans Arcs were present and with them the flower of the Cheyennes. So great a camp of soldiers had never been seen. The Crows were many but Tokala knew that their fighting force was nowhere near so great as that which had gathered in her rescue. Though her lover had been miraculously successful in war Tokala felt that he could not stand against such a company. Then, too, she had that faith in her father which every faithful Sioux daughter must have in a sire who had won so many victories.

When she had seen what a force he had summoned to her rescue her elation had been very great and her present position was one of such importance as

seldom falls to the lot of an Indian woman. Yet she proved a veritable woman and conflicting emotions overcame her. She attempted to eat but the meat choked her and she arose hastily, longing for some retreat where she might indulge her grief without attracting notice. As she could think of no place for hiding she sank upon a robe and buried her face in her hands.

Yellow-Iron glanced at her in surprise. He had been talking with Keyahanhi, commending his nephew for the stand he had taken and declaring that for himself he would not return to his own country, until just reprisal had been made upon the faithless Crows. He was like most of his kind respecting the troubles of women and, seeing that Tokala was grieving about something, thought it the part of wisdom to ignore her.

Keyahanhi remained in the teepee after Yellow-Iron had departed for the council which was to convene immediately. Her father was no sooner gone out than Tokala arose and turned a face of anger upon the brother.

"You have made a fine use," she stormed, "of the confidence I gave you this morning. Lo, you have stirred all this company to war against the Crows when one of our own faithless and lying chiefs alone is to blame. Why should there be killing of people

and innocent ones because of such a poor creature as one Dakota maiden? It was one of our own nation stirred those young men to take me captive; and why should you counsel a silly quarrel against the Absaroke?"

Keyahanhi bore this swift accumulation of reproaches with the utmost patience and good humour. His reply was characteristic.

"Wait, sister," he said mildly, "only be patient and you shall see to what end I have talked. The good spirits have indeed spoken to me and they have told me that there will be no war with the Crows. And now I see, out of the tiyopa, that your friends Holy Hand and the trader have arrived. We shall have much debating and I must be going."

Tokala's faith in Keyahanhi was great and his words gave her much comfort. She was now aggrieved that she had chided him.

As Keyahanhi had prophesied the arena of debate was a heated one that afternoon. The Indian orator loves an audience and when the interest is great enough to secure a large number of hearers and to hold them he is ready with harangue. DeSmet, while he had been greeted cordially among the Indians and had received the acknowledgment of Yellow-Iron and other relatives of Tokala for the

service he had rendered, found himself quite de trop in an attempt to stay the trend of debate.

He asked to talk and the chiefs treated him respectfully—said "Han! Han!" in approval and then their orators ignored his remarks, no reference being made to them in the speeches which followed.

When night came the voice of council had decided in favour of reprisal and elated young warriors began to busy themselves getting their saddles, weapons and trappings into order; and they strutted and swaggered after the manner of callow soldiers. In the morning they would march upon the Crow town and, trusting in their numbers, would send in a runner to demand of the Absaroke delivery of all offenders against the law of the sun dance. If the Crows should prefer to fight there would be such a battle as the survivors might recount with pride to the end of their days.

So the war-drums beat high and they danced the "No-flight" dance, and the valley was filled with the advance thunders of war. Keyahanhi had told Yellow-Iron privately of the treachery of Catches Eagles and the weight of the old chief's influence had prevailed. When they were before the village of Cloud Chief the Sans Arc should be proven and if, as they felt certain, he were guilty he should be surrendered to the mercies of the Absaroke. As these

should deal with him well and good. It was certain that he must remain an outlaw among Dakotas—an example for those who should again be tempted to tamper with the truce of the sun dance. Tokala, informed of this decision, slept well despite the noise of the camp. Truly of wondrous wisdom was Keyahanhi!

But neither the wisdom of that young man, nor of the mature heads who had lavished the treasures of oratory in their long debate, were of any avail. The vexed question of responsibility for an unprecedented act of broken faith was settled by one who, yet in his youth, had proven himself the greatest of Dakota warriors.

At dawn the deeply somnolent warriors, resting in the security of numbers, were aroused from their blankets by the penetrating quality of a single voice, launched at them from the bluffs and which seemed to fill the whole valley.

"Ho! Ho!" shouted those Oglalas who first were awakened, "it is the voice of Koska of the Brulés!" and Sioux and Cheyenne were aroused to discover clouds of warriors sitting in groups upon the near bluffs. And the allies suddenly realized that the matchless chief of the Crows had secured, without alarming, every scout they had out on the hills, that he might have descended upon them as they slept

with a slaughter unknown in their annals of war. Their chagrin, as they gazed upon those squads of horsemen, was as poignant as any emotion the barbaric may feel. As they gathered their weapons or ran for their horses, the chief of the Crows left a party of his fellows and rode out upon a spur of bluff until he sat, looking down upon the nearer lodges, at little more than a bow-shot's distance.

He raised his hand to command attention and when hundreds stood open-mouthed he began to speak in a voice which none could imitate. Every ear was bent to listen.

"Ho! Ye Dakotas and Cheyennes," he shouted, "you are come on an errand which does you honour —but ye are come out upon false information of your scouts. There is one among you who is a liar and a breaker of the sacred peace. I speak of Catches Eagles, your master of ceremonies, whom I proclaim as a vile skunk who induced my young men to do a stroke of treachery. Those who did his bidding are with me, fast bound, ready to be turned over to you when I have met this faithless snake of the Sans Arc in a single fight to be witnessed of your warriors and mine. What say ye?"

And up from the mouth of Sioux and Cheyenne went a mighty roar of approval.

XXVI

THE TEST OF COMBAT

THOUGH Catches Eagles had sought to turn back the allies he proved no craven. When the shouts of the valley forces had subsided he walked toward the Crow chief and mounted a little knoll.

"Listen, you half-breed Crow," he shouted, "you were thrust out from your own people because of your filthy imaginings. You were not fit to look upon their maidens. You are a traitor and liar and I shall cut out your poison tongue and feed it to the dogs." His unflinching defiance was greeted with whoops of approval.

"Hau—hau—hau!" answered Cloud Chief, when he could make himself heard, "you indeed talk something like a man, whereat I wonder much that so brave a voice issues from such a crawling thing. When the sun is two hands high then let us meet at yonder little turn of the river. Let us fight on horses and bring only the knife and let him be roasted alive who does an act of treachery. Is it well?"

"Even as you say, poltroon and apostate!" yelled

the Sans Arc, "with any weapon you may choose and in whatsoever manner I shall feed your heart and tongue to the coyotes!"

"He has a sting in his tongue," said the older men and his brave words were highly applauded.

Catches Eagles had met the supreme test of a warrior's courage and there were few who did not frankly admire his generous acceptance of the enemy's terms.

In his teepee Yellow-Iron expressed his satisfaction at this turn of events. "It is best so;" he declared, "thus shall we settle who is to blame in this scandal and there will be the fewer widows and orphans among us."

Tokala looked long and earnestly at Keyahanhi. "Be of good cheer, sister," he counselled, "the Great Mystery will attend to it that the guilty shall suffer. The Most Mysterious is wiser than all of us and justice will be done."

With this answer she was fain to be content though she knew that her lover had been put to needless peril. The faithless one should have been punished at no one's risk but since Cloud Chief had taken the matter upon himself it ill became her, who had so many times refused to share his lot, to repine at the fateful chance of combat.

A morning's meal was eaten with the hosts en-

camped on opposite flats of the valley; after which preparations for the fight and its witnessing went on as calmly and as inexorably as the brewing of a storm. When the "sun was two hands high" the crowds gathered, the Sioux and Cheyennes upon one side of the river and the Crows upon the other. The loop of river-bend which Cloud Chief had chosen for the duel was a natural arena. On either side smooth flats overlooked the treeless spot and upon these higher grounds there was area for horsemen to sit in semi-circular groups.

The priest at his little camp, viewing sadly this preparation, said to Bonhomme: "Come, Raymond, let us be going. It is not for us to countenance this savage contest. There may be fighting among them all at the finish."

"Do you ride on, father, if you must;" replied the trader, "this business interests me too much to go tamely away. Let me see the fellows fight. It will be a brave show."

DeSmet, upon reflection that his offices might avail in some possible contingency, decided to remain. As the wild troops gathered the white men took position and stood looking on until the end of the drama.

When the forces were grouped upon the elevations and all was ready for the fray, there was a falling

apart among the Crows and their chief rode through. Behind him, free and unbound, came seven Sioux and Cheyenne scouts whom his men had captured during the night. These, amid general acclamation, were allowed to cross the river and take their place among their fellows. Cloud Chief astride his war-pony and wearing a noble head-dress, halted upon the fighting ground. In a brief time the Sioux also broke ranks to make way for their champion. He crossed the stream singing his war chant. He wore a war-bonnet of red eagles' feathers.

His chant was loud and boastful, and he halted when near to his enemy. "I am come out," he cried, "to meet this renegade Brulé, traitor to his tribesmen, who accuses me of breaking the truce of the sun dance. You shall see that he is a liar and, for all the reputation he has won, a woman and a weakling!"

"You, indeed," replied Cloud Chief, "talk very big and seem to think yourself somewhat of a man! Come on, snake of a Sans Arc who dare not capture a girl whom our boys seized at your bidding. Let us have less of vain talk and something of fighting."

Instantly Catches Eagles spurred his horse forward and, drawing his knife, closed with his adversary. It was a bold and swift attack. The pony of the Crow chief, held tightly to the rein, reared against the

charger and was nearly thrown from its feet in the shock. The men leaned toward each other as their horses reared and their knives clicked and rasped as they parried swift strokes. In the end Cloud Chief was borne backward and his mount well nigh lost its footing but, in the same instant, he struck the Sans Arc's horse upon its muzzle and the animal swerved aside. As a result of the first encounter blood trickled from a slight wound upon the Crow chief's forearm.

The Sans Arc had mounted a vicious pony, one well-known as a fighter—a kind of raging creature which, perforce obeying bit and spur, would seek to wreak vengeance upon the object ridden against, whether this were horse or buffalo. The blow which Cloud Chief had delivered with the handle of his knife served only to enrage the brute. Of its own accord the animal launched itself at the Crow chief's horse, with open mouth and slapping forehoofs. Such action gave the Sans Arc a plain advantage; for the other's pony, taken by surprise and unused to such tactics, reared and wheeled trying to avoid the attack. Cloud Chief was forced to give ground and fight for control of his mount. As he wheeled and circled a shout went up from the Sans Arc's adherents. It was plain that their man, assisted by his horse, was about to win. In a swift rush his knife had gleamed across the face of the Crow, who had to throw himself back-

ward to avoid the blade. Had Catches Eagles had control of the rein all would have been over in that stroke.

The two again faced each other for a breath. "Hau! hau!" shouted Cloud Chief, "it appears that I must fight both you and your crazy horse. Come on, you mangy dog!"

"Coyote! snake! traitor and liar!" yelled his adversary, and again launched his fighting pony. The horse of Cloud Chief became well nigh unmanageable in this third attack and ran backward, in spite of spur and voice, while the rider literally thrust off its opponent at the point of his knife. Again the two wheeled and circled and came to a brief stand, Catches Eagles holding his plunging horse with difficulty.

The faces and eyes of the fighters were ablaze. "Get off that beast and fight on foot, you snake, or I will cut his eyes out," said the Crow chief, and his words were like the stroke of a quirt.

By this time there was an uproar among the Crows who were clamouring for the Sioux to get another horse. This was answered by yells from the Sans Arcs. "Go after him!" "Give him no rest!" "Ride him down!" "You've got him scared!"

And afresh the Sioux launched his vicious pony. With open jaws and squealing with rage the brute

charged. By a supreme effort, reins in one hand and fiercely plying the spurs, Cloud Chief held his mount against the attack. The horses reared in the shock and, as the Sans Arc's pony buried its teeth in the neck of his own, the Crow chief planted his knife between the eyes in a stroke which drove the blade half way to its hilt. Horse and rider went down and the air was rent with whoops of approval from Crow and Sioux alike. It was a mighty stroke, a deed of arms to have won applause in the days of St. John of Acre.

As the Sans Arc got to his feet Cloud Chief dismounted and it was then seen that he held only the hilt of a knife in his hand. He flung the useless thing away and a roar went up from the followers of the Sioux while the Absaroke shouted to their man to run—to beat his enemy to the point of starting! This would, after he had put himself on foot and so upon equality in a race, have justified him of all present and have fitted him to take up the quarrel anew.

But he threw off his war-bonnet and stood, in the tense attitude of a wrestler, waiting for the tackle. The Sans Arc had repressed an open demonstration, but his face was lighted with a fierce and confident joy. He had the hated rival at his mercy. To have hesitated when the man was weaponless, yet defiant, would have set the seal of cowardice upon him. As

it was, the Crow chief had suffered the chance of battle, and no man's hand would be lifted to assist him. He, Catches Eagles, had the right to deal with his foe in any manner he should choose.

He cast aside his head-dress, laughed a cruel laugh, and approached with knife drawn for a stroke. He circled warily about the chief to break his guard of defense and then darted in. Instead of waiting Cloud Chief leaped to meet his enemy and, disregardful of the knife, closed with him in a seemingly reckless fashion. Catches Eagles' blade went too far in the stroke and the two were seen in a locked hold, writhing together as wrestlers, and the Crow's arms were gripped clean about those of his adversary in a hug which for the instant pinned them uselessly. Then as they whirled about, tripping at each other, the Sans Arc was seen turning his knife upon the other's back. Apparently the fight could have but one ending and must be over with quickly.

Keyahanhi, sitting his horse near to Yellow-Iron, groaned in spirit. Could it be that he had been mistaken in the voices of the Most Mysterious? Yellow-Iron, himself the impartial judge, said, "Hau! it appears that the Crow lied."

Then a marvellous thing happened. The Crow's hands went down in a lightning movement and the Sans Arc's arms were swept apart with the adversary

grasping both his wrists. The grip of steel was Cloud Chief's. Slowly, as his body writhed to free them, Catches Eagles' hands were borne upward and over his head. Suddenly the chief's leg was interlocked with his; there was a backward wrench and his knife dropped from the Sans Arc's nerveless fingers. And, with a dislocated shoulder, he was flung contemptuously upon his back.

No man had ever seen the like—a feat of strength and dexterity matchless—and the yells of the hosts of onlookers touched the clouds.

Not deigning to pick up the weapon of his fallen foe Cloud Chief strode to his horse and unwound a lariat which wrapped its saddle pommel. He made a noose, as his adversary arose, faint from pain and dizzy from a hard fall. He halted in front of Catches Eagles and the latter, gathering his wits, spoke:

"Do with me as you will;" said he, "I am a defeated man and at your mercy."

The Crow chief cast his rawhide over the other's neck and drew it taut.

"Come," he said, "I will do nothing further to you."

The vanquished followed and the Crow led him across a shallows and mounted the opposite bank. He walked slowly leading his prisoner in front of Yellow-Iron to whom he passed the rope.

"Here," he said, "I bring your young man; let the daughter of Yellow-Iron say what shall be done with him."

Again the sky was rent with tumult of applause and all stood at attention while Cloud Chief crossed the stream, picked up his discarded accoutrements, and, leading his horse, walked back to his company.

"Take these," he said, "I have no longer any use for them." He then wheeled and returned to the Sioux, wearing only a loin cloth.

"I came among you naked at the first," he said, "and naked I return to you. I am a Dakota."

The Sioux were astonished at his action but their appreciation was manifest in the shouts of approval which alone could voice it and which swelled to a demonstration of supreme delight.

* * * * * *

While these things were happening Tokala sat in her father's teepee, her head muffled in a blanket. When Keyahanhi returned and told her of the outcome of the duel she got up quietly, saying nothing, and went about preparing the noon-meal.

That evening, after a conference with the brother, she was alone again. When darkness came on she heard one chanting plaintively outside the lodge. She recognized the voice of the victorious singing of

his love for her. And, presently, she threw aside the tiyopa and went out carrying a robe of her father's. Her lover was seated in front of the teepee, and just as he had surrendered himself to his tribesmen. Tokala approached and, leaning over him, wrapped the robe about his naked body.

"My beloved," she said, "the night is chill," and then, as he lifted his head to voice his thanks, she stepped back and spoke again.

"Wait," she said, and returned to the lodge. She threw open the tiyopa and let the firelight shine upon him. In a moment she returned, bearing a bundle in her arms. She cast at his feet a war-shirt and leggings and a head-dress, painted in such cunning figures as only Keyahanhi could have traced. On top of these she cast a bow and arrows, a hatchet and knife.

"These are your war-clothes and your weapons," she said, "the gift of my brother Keyahanhi, who is not a warrior but who has carried these things because of a spirit warrior who rides at his side and who has promised to fight for him. A pony and saddle which my father owes to you will be delivered in the morning. And now, if you choose, you may come inside our lodge."

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